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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 1997

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Spencer plans to surround Diana's island grave with ring of steel

By DANIEL MCGRORY

A SEVEN-FOOT high steel cordon is to be erected around the island where Diana, Princess of Wales, is buried before her ancestral home is opened to the public in the summer.

Her brother, Earl Spencer, has asked his local authority for permission to build the steel and cast-iron fence decorated with thousands of heart-shaped motifs around the oval lake at Althorp.

This application is seen as the start of Lord Spencer's elaborate plans for his Northamptonshire estate to become one of Britain's biggest attractions. It opens on July 1 for eight weeks only.

Local council officials, who expect to override some protests about the plans from Lord Spencer's neighbours, predict that he will have to deal with "up to 3,000 visitors a day" in the 16th-century gardens. Estate staff believe the numbers will be far greater than that. "This is all so

unique, we simply don't know what to expect," one said.

What is certain is that Althorp, which the earl describes as a drain on his resources, can expect more visitors in a week than the 9,000 it usually welcomes in a year.

Lord Spencer has yet to decide how much to charge visitors. By the July opening it is hoped to have completed "an appropriate memorial" to the Princess and a museum — featuring family photographs, memorabilia and cine film — will be built in a stable block in the grounds.

A spokesman for the earl said: "He has always said he does not want to make a profit from his sister's death but clearly there will have to be a cost to cover what will be extra staffing and arrangements for those wishing to visit."

The barrier, painted blue, will stand 15 to 20 feet from the water's edge, with one main entrance gate to limit the numbers

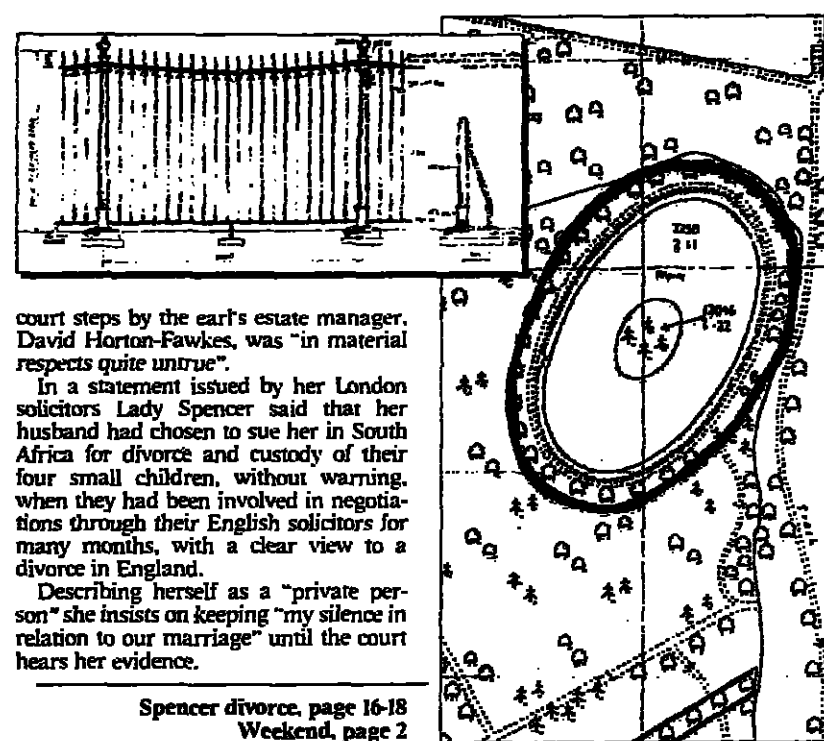
allowed in to see the island. The exact location of the grave has never been disclosed but Lord Spencer has said that it cannot be seen from the edge of the lake.

Security measures will be also improved to include remote-controlled gates at the front and rear entrances, although staff say that there have been no breaches since the Princess was buried there in September.

The earl's planning application to Daventry District Council comes as he continues to fight his wife in the Cape Town High Court over their divorce settlement. That hearing will resume on Monday unless rival lawyers manage to agree an out-of-court financial settlement over the weekend.

Yesterday, Countess Spencer hit back at claims from a friend of her husband that she had launched a "malicious" campaign against her husband in the hope of financial gain.

She said the statement delivered on the



court steps by the earl's estate manager, David Horton-Fawkes, was "in material respects quite untrue".

In a statement issued by her London solicitors Lady Spencer said that her husband had chosen to sue her in South Africa for divorce and custody of their four small children, without warning, when they had been involved in negotiations through their English solicitors for many months, with a clear view to a divorce in England.

Describing herself as a "private person" she insists on keeping "my silence in relation to our marriage" until the court hears her evidence.

Spencer divorce, page 16-18
Weekend, page 2

Hunting foxes to be illegal by 2000

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

THE end of foxhunting in Britain by 2000 was predicted by ministers, MPs and campaigners last night after the Commons gave a 260-vote majority to a backbench attempt to outlaw hunting with dogs.

After the most passionate debate at Westminster since the general election in May, Michael Foster's Bill was carried on second-reading by 411 votes to 151, one of the biggest ever votes in support of a private member's measure.

Within minutes of the result, Labour MPs received a message from Tony Blair that the leading campaigners interpreted as the death-knell for hunting. The Prime Minister, who was visiting British troops in Bosnia, told Conservative MPs not to frustrate the passage of a Bill for which there was clear support in the country and the Commons.

Then, in a remark that MPs

took as confirmation that if necessary the Government would eventually ensure that a ban was implemented before the next election, Mr Blair added: "We are keeping this matter open to review for the future."

Despite the huge majority, Mr Foster's Bill is not expected to become law. The Government has delayed against giving it the extra parliamentary time it would need to get through both Houses, fearing that its already crowded timetable would be disrupted. But Mr Blair's statement was seen as a clear hint of government involvement in future. A senior government source said: "Hunting will be banned by the millennium."

The Bill now goes into its committee stage in the Commons. It is likely to emerge from that, but almost certainly will be killed off when it returns to the floor of the House for its report stage.

However, the strength of support for the Bill means that that relieve will be only temporary. Although ten Cabinet ministers including Mr Blair were away from the Commons and did not vote, only two Labour MPs — Kate Hoey and Llin Golding — opposed the Bill. Whips and business managers accept that there is an unstoppable momentum within the Labour Party for a change in the law that will have to be met.

Whether that is done by allowing an amendment to a future government Bill or by backing another Private Member's Bill in the next session has yet to be decided. In the meantime, the Government's strategy, which came during the speech of George Howard, the Home Office minister, and in the responses of Mr Blair and other ministers afterwards, is to pin the blame on the Tories for the expected failure of Mr Foster's Bill.

For that reason there will be no on-the-record statements that the Government will push a Bill through in future; ministers believe that to do so would reduce the political gain they want to secure from claiming that the Conservatives are the reason for the failure of this one.



Elton John before the sale of his clothes, which raised more than £50,000 for his Aids foundation on its first day.

Blair hopes to save coal jobs

The Government is looking at detailed plans to save the coal industry and the controversy over pit closures and the loss of thousands of jobs.

An initiative from No 10 looks at measures to ensure the industry's survival over the next five to seven years which may include altering the balance of use between gas and coal.

Islanders are ready to flee

An evacuation plan is being drawn up by a group of Pacific islands after research showing that global warming and rising sea levels will eventually make them uninhabitable.

The Marshall Islands are believed to be the first of a string of low-lying Pacific and Caribbean states to consider such drastic action.

Belgians to ban tobacco ads

The Belgian Parliament has voted to ban tobacco advertising from roadside billboards, newspapers, magazines, supermarkets and pubs.

British Government sources said that the Belgian development would have no impact on Tony Blair's decision to exempt Formula One motor racing.

Porn again pilgrims flock to the festival

By MICHAEL GOVE

THE biggest concentration of rubber outside Malaysia was on display at London's Olympia Exhibition Centre yesterday at Erotica, Britain's first commercial sex fair — a sort of Ideal Hormone Exhibition.

The attempt by the UK's porn, fetish and fantasy industry to go respectable is expected to attract more than 20,000 curious customers to the three-day festival. For £25 they can visit a selection of stalls from Karmamootra to Fantasy Liquid Latex and buy something for the weekend or the best-selling video House of Whipcord.

The exhibition is the brainchild of Brian Wiseman, a rag

trade magnate turned conference organiser who graciously acknowledges the help of the Metropolitan Police Vice Squad in his introduction to the event. The constabulary had given the event their seal of approval and Wiseman had allowed Olympia to enjoy a sex establishment licence for the weekend.

Mr Wiseman conceived of the exhibition after detecting a market for "naughty but nice" merchandise in "middle-shelf" men's magazines such as FHM and Maxim.

The exhibition, a stallholder explained, was aimed more at the "leather-jacketed lad than the dirty raincoat brigade".

Not all the women present were grading book covers, however. The event organisers were at pains to emphasise that the show was aimed at all (not just both) sexes. One female shopper, Jenny Ford from North London, had made the trip to Olympia to "stock up on erotic lingerie".

Ms Ford, "put me down as 29", and her boyfriend who preferred to remain anonymous invested in a handsome cat-o-nine tails for only £20. "It's a bit of fun isn't it?" giggled Ms Ford. Her boyfriend kept quiet.

I made my excuses and left.



Tax-free savings at the checkout

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND ANNE ASHWORTH

SUPERMARKETS will play a key role in a savings revolution to be unveiled by Gordon Brown next week.

In a move aimed at encouraging lower-income people to build up a nest-egg, the Chancellor's scheme will also allow small savers to earn interest free of tax. The new-look "individual savings accounts" (ISAs) will be sold and serviced at supermarket checkouts.

Ministers expect that shoppers paying their bills will be asked if they want to put £20 in their ISA, much as they are now asked if they want to draw cash.

Such big retail chains as Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, and Tesco are expected to promote the new accounts, which insiders at the Treasury have dubbed "People's Peps".

ISAs will replace existing tax-free savings, including

Tessas (tax-exempt special savings accounts). They will also embrace instant-access bank and building society savings accounts, currently liable to income tax.

Tessas require savers to lock up their money for five years to earn a tax-free return, but the new accounts will not need a waiting period. Small savers, putting aside perhaps a few hundred pounds a year, will enjoy the same tax privileges as bigger investors in Peps and Tessas.

There will still be limits on the amounts of money that can be deposited tax-free, but the ceiling will be higher than the £10,000 figure floated last month. This compares with an annual limit of £9,000 and £9,000 over five years for Tessas.

Weekend Money, pages 51-64

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WED 29 NOV 1997

TODAY IN THE TIMES



'He was stunned when it was said he had 12 mistresses'

Lord Spencer's divorce case
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'I didn't know how to have fun in the Sixties'

Valerie Grove meets Joan Baez
Page 21



'Hitler patted him on the head as a child'

Daniel Faison obituary
Page 25

Belgium votes to ban tobacco advertising

BY NICHOLAS WATT
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

TONY BLAIR'S difficulties in winning an exemption for Formula One from a Europe-wide ban on tobacco sponsorship deepened last night when Belgium voted for a blanket ban.

Less than a week before European health ministers meet in Brussels to hammer out a directive banning tobacco sponsorship, the Belgian parliament voted to ban tobacco advertising from roadside billboards, newspapers, magazines, supermarkets and pubs. It will also outlaw sponsorship of sports, cultural and musical events.

British Government sources said that the Belgian development would have no impact on Mr Blair's decision to exempt Formula One motor racing from a ban on tobacco advertising and

sponsorship. One source said that Tessa Jowell, the Health Minister, would demand at next Thursday's meeting of European health ministers that Formula One be exempted in order to save motor racing 50,000 jobs.

One Government source said: "There will be no pressure on us to change our minds. The only effect will be on public opinion." At next week's meeting Ms Jowell will be hoping to delay the drafting of the Directive until next year during Britain's presidency of the EU.

The change in the law stunned organisers of the Belgian Grand Prix, who warned last night that it would kill off the annual race at the Spa-Francorchamps track. Joseph Moxhet, president of the Spa-Francorchamps track, said: "It's quite simple. I fear next year's Belgian Grand Prix will be the last." The law, which will come

into force on January 1, 1999, will only allow tobacco and newspaper shops to indicate they are selling tobacco products.

Louis Van Velthoven, a Flemish socialist who proposed the law, hailed yesterday's vote in the Belgian senate. He told BRTN Radio: "This is one of the strictest laws in Europe and it makes me happy. Belgium is giving, with other countries including France, a good signal to Europe to allow a European directive banning tobacco advertising and sponsoring on a European level. We absolutely need this directive because I don't have to tell you that youth is still confronted with cigarette brands if Formula One races are held in Germany or Italy."

Mr Van Velthoven called on organisers of the Belgian Grand Prix to find other sponsors. He said: "They should get the opportunity to find other

financial sources. Tobacco firms too should be able to remove advertising. There is now a majority in this country against tobacco advertising and sponsoring. Should we find any loopholes, we are determined to close those too."

The European Commission has been seeking a total ban of tobacco advertising for the past eight years. But Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark have blocked its proposals on several occasions.

Labour, which had campaigned for a total ban, infuriated the European Commission earlier this month when it announced that Formula One should be exempted. Pádraig Flynn, the Social Affairs Commissioner, wrote a stinging letter to Ms Jowell after she informed him of the Government about-turn. Mr Blair's change of heart also led to enormous political difficulties at home and within his own party.

Class size increase threatens poll target

BY JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

CLASS sizes rose again last year to a 20-year high, it was announced yesterday. However, the Government insisted that it was on target to meet its promise of smaller classes in the first three years of school by the end of the Parliament.

The number of pupils for every state school teacher rose from 18.5 to 18.6 in January. More than a quarter of primary children were in classes of more than 30, compared with barely a fifth in 1992.

Labour's election manifesto promised that classes of five, six and seven-year-olds would have a maximum of 30 pupils. The figures show that almost 500,000 children in this age-group are in larger classes.

Stephen Byers, the School Standards Minister, said that schools were already planning to reduce class sizes. The abolition of the Assisted Places Scheme would free £22 million next year to employ 1,000 more primary teachers, with numbers rising after that.



Tony Blair has lunch yesterday with British troops in Banja Luka, the largest Serb-held town in Bosnia

Blair pledges to fight Bosnia war criminals

Tony Blair, on his first visit to Bosnia yesterday, underlined his determination to see war criminals brought to justice. He also, thanked British peacekeeping troops for their "tremendous" contribution but made clear Britain did not plan to remove its military presence from the region in the near future. He said: "Those people that committed crimes of ethnic cleansing and were responsible for the appalling scenes that we saw here in Bosnia, those people responsible for that should be brought to justice."

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Plan for lawyers to sit on the bench

BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

PLANS for judicial "work experience" schemes in which black lawyers can sit alongside judges and learn what it is like on the bench are expected to be unveiled by the Lord Chancellor today.

Lord Irvine of Lairg would also like to see circuit judges, district judges and recorders take junior colleagues "under their wing" to advise and guide them up the judicial ladder. The proposals will be put forward at a conference organised by the Law Society, Bar and Lord Chancellor's Department with sponsorship from The Times.

The Lord Chancellor is concerned at the paucity of black judges and black Queen's Counsel. He is expected to reveal figures showing that the number of ethnic minority lawyers applying to be Queen's Counsel has fallen.

In 1992, there were 420 applications for silk, of which only 14 or 3.3 per cent were not white. But in 1997, it stood at only 2.4 per cent. There are no black judges in the senior judiciary. Only one per cent of circuit judges are not white, and 1.5 per cent of recorders. But 3.4 per cent of assistant recorders are from the ethnic minorities, and are likely to be appointed as judges in time.

Lord Irvine is expected to call on more ethnic minority lawyers to come forward. They should forget social stereotypes about judges or the statistics which show the predominance of judges from public school, he is likely to say.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Hague devises new slogan for Tories

William Hague began the rebranding of the Conservative Party yesterday with the launch of "popular Conservatism" to rival "new Labour". In a speech to the Tory women's conference in London, he said that the slogan covered reforming the welfare system, supporting institutions such as the family, and enhancing community and security.

"Popular Conservatism will be about building strong and free local institutions to support community and security. Popular Conservatism will be about enforcing the rule of law," he said. The Tory leader said that he would hold a conference in Harrogate in March to vote on his reforms of the party, and that there would be another "bonding session" for Conservative MPs next year.

Beckett under pressure

Margaret Beckett was facing growing pressure last night to wind-up the blind trust that finances her constituency office in the House of Commons. The President of the Board of Trade yesterday defended her secret source of funding but said that if the investigation into party political funding by Sir Patrick Neill, the Public Standards watchdog, criticised the confidential trusts she would close it.

Mild spell at an end

The first snows of winter were forecast yesterday, with the unusually mild November weather ending early next week. Sharply colder conditions, including night-time frosts and snow showers over higher ground in eastern Britain, are expected. Forecasters said that the warm spell of weather made November the fourth mildest this century, with temperatures some 0.8C above average. Forecast, page 32

£36 mushroom infested

A wild cauliflower mushroom bought for £36 at Harvey Nichols in Knightsbridge, London, was contaminated with rodent droppings and hair, and infested with a centipede and larvae. The store admitted selling food unfit for consumption and was fined £1,500 with £2,083 costs by West London magistrates. The customer was an off-duty environmental health officer for Kensington and Chelsea council.

Pupil cannot return

The High Court yesterday refused to order a Kent girls' school to take back an unruly 14-year-old even though her assisted place was withdrawn unlawfully. Rosalind McCarthy, the headmistress of Cobham School, considered the excluded girl's place an "immoral" waste of public money. Mr Justice Dyson said he could not ignore a petition signed by 15 pupils who said they were "terrified" of her.

Guerin suspect jailed

Patrick Holland, 38, who was suspected of involvement in the murder of the journalist Veronica Guerin, was jailed for 20 years for drug dealing, the most severe sentence ever handed down in Ireland for the crime. The Special Criminal Court was told that Holland received about 35 kg of cannabis a week for several months from a Dublin lock-up. The 20,000 kg of cannabis had an estimated value of £20 million.

No more Hawick Balls

After more than 100 years, Hawick Balls — the mint-flavoured sweets, favoured by yachtsmen and Antarctic explorers — are no longer being made. Hills of Hawick is in receivership and the staff of seven have been laid off. The balls were first produced in the 1850s by two local women, Aggie Lamb and Jessie McVittie. In their heyday more than 12,000 tins of balls were sold every year, at £1.80 a tin.

Christmas post dates

Christmas cards going across the globe should be in the post by next Saturday, according to the Royal Mail. Cards and letters to addresses within Europe should be posted by December 13 to arrive before Christmas Day. Inland second-class cards should be sent by December 18. For first-class mail the last posting date is December 21. The Royal Mail is expecting to handle more than two billion cards.

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Second body from Luxor massacre lost



Karina Turner: may have been cremated

THE body of a second member of the family killed in the massacre at the Egyptian tourist resort of Luxor has been lost. Grieving relatives were told yesterday that Karina Turner's remains might already have been cremated elsewhere.

The 24-year-old air stewardess died with her mother, Joan Turner, 51, and her daughter, Shaunnah, 5. Earlier this week it was discovered that the coffin supposed to contain the body of Karina Turner's mother actually contained that of a Swiss woman. Joan

Woman killed with mother and daughter was wrongly identified, Paul Wilkinson reports

Turner's body lay in Zurich. The three bodies were initially identified by Egyptian authorities before repatriation. Those of Karina Turner and her mother were wrongly identified in London by three people who knew the family, including a relative.

James Turnbull, the deputy assistant coroner for Halifax, said that he was scouring the world to find Miss Turner's body. "I like to be optimistic that the missing body will be found. It is a sad possibility that she could have been buried or cremated in another country but I have asked the Foreign Office for descriptions of all people killed in the tragedy to find out where she has gone."

He expressed his deepest sympathy for the relatives. "I can imagine them feeling deep distress and anger and I can hardly imagine a situation for them which could have been worse. First of all their family were murdered in terrible circumstances but on top of

that there is this added difficulty."

Last night Laurence Whitton, Shaunnah's grandfather, called the authorities who mixed up the bodies "blundering fools". He put some of the blame on Joan Turner's nephew, Ken Robertshaw, an inspector with West Yorkshire Police, who he said had identified his aunt and Karina.

Mr Whitton said: "That inspector identified them and it's their name on the death certificate. There has been a cock-up. We just want to put them to rest so we can return to some kind of normality."

These were not the best of circumstances. The subjects had been dead for some days and transported a long distance. They had been murdered and obviously suffered fatal gun injuries.

"There are similarities between people of varying ages. I can understand it happening and I do not offer any criticism of the person who did the identification."

A colleague of Inspector Robertshaw at the West Yorkshire Police HQ in Wakefield said: "He is distraught. How would you feel?"

Internet ban on 'domain names' sales

BY ADRIAN LEE

TWO businessmen were banned yesterday from registering Internet addresses based on the names of leading companies for their own profit.

In a clear warning to others, a High Court judge said that the practice, which is widespread on the Internet, would not be tolerated.

Richard Conway and Julian Nicholson, both 23, specialised in registering "domain names" such as "ladbrokes.com", which are the essential part of locating websites. The pair registered the names for a few pounds and intended to sell them to the companies involved for large sums, the court was told.

Deputy Judge Jonathan Sumption, QC, granted injunctions to five companies — Ladbrokes, BT, Virgin Enterprises, J. Sainsbury and Marks & Spencer — and ordered the two men to pay £65,000 costs.

Mr Conway and Mr Nicholson and their businesses, One in a Million, Global Media

Communications and Junic, registered the names and offered them for sale in much the same way as company registration agents.

The court heard that Mr Conway wrote to Burger King offering to sell them the name "burgerking.co.uk" for £25,000 plus VAT, otherwise it would be available for sale to any other interested party.

The judge stressed the mere registration of a name was not, in itself, passing-off or infringement of a trade mark. But the obvious threat was there and injunctions should be granted to prevent it.

Other names offered by Global included "macdonalds.co.uk" and "thetimes.co.uk", "spice-girls.net" and "buckinghampalace.org".

The judge also directed the men to take steps to have the disputed names assigned to the complaining companies.

Mr Conway, who thought up the idea with Mr Nicholson at university, said they were considering appealing.



A red panda cub, one of two born at Edinburgh Zoo in July, explores its enclosure yesterday. The rare pair, a female and a male, whose numbers are threatened by the destruction of their natural habitat, still do not have names and zoo staff have launched a

Firefox of China views its northern world

competition to name them. Karen Howlett, their keeper, told of her delight with her charges. "We're so pleased. The cubs only started to emerge from their

cubbing dens in October. Now they're coming out every day, exploring their enclosure, learning to climb the trees, playing with each other, and eating

bamboo and fruit." In the wild they live in forests in China, northern India, Nepal and Burma. Being much smaller and more agile than their giant

panda cousins, they can climb steeper slopes and live at higher altitudes. Although bamboo is their staple food they eat the occasional egg or small bird. The Chinese were so entranced with their titian-coloured coats that they called them firefoxes.

Vet hopes for appeal after note discovered

BY RICHARD FORD

A VET serving life for the murder of his wife has had his case referred back to the Court of Appeal after the discovery of a note suggesting she intended to kill herself. Ryan James, 42, has consistently claimed that his wife committed suicide but made it look like murder.

The note was discovered in March 1996 by the woman he had married in jail, in an old copy of the *Veterinary Record*. It read: "Ryan, I leave you absolutely nothing but this note — if you find it in time, Sam. Sam was his wife Sandra's pet name.

The note expresses her bitterness at learning of her husband's affair with Catherine Crookes, who married Mr James four months after his 1995 conviction. Handwriting and forensic experts have confirmed that the note was written by Sandra James.

Yesterday the Criminal Cases Review Commission referred the case back to the Appeal Court. A letter to James's lawyer concluded: "We consider there is a real possibility that his conviction would not be upheld on a referral." The note was evidence that had not been considered at the trial or at an earlier hearing at the Appeal Court in 1996.

James, who denied murder, was convicted at Stafford Crown Court; he had poisoned his wife with a drug used to anaesthetise horses, apparently because he wanted to collect her life insurance, to support his new life with Ms Crookes.

Accountant gambled £7m in clients' cash

BY PAUL WHITTAKER

A PARTNER in a City firm of accountants who swindled the funds of his rich and famous clients to wager more than £7 million on horse races was jailed for two and a half years yesterday.

In all Alan Lewis, 45, unemployed of Golders Green, northwest London, gambled £7,049,838 over six years for the overall loss of £391,531. He swindled his clients, including a member of the Electric Light Orchestra, another British Eighties pop band Londonbeat and former British Olympic cyclist Malcolm Elliott. He had acted as their tax adviser.

Although an unqualified accountant, Lewis was rated so highly that Mayfair tax specialists Gelfand, Reniart, Feldman and Brown International sought special permission from the Institute of Chartered Accountants to enable him to join as a partner in 1987. The company, with offices across America, handles the British touring companies of such stars as Michael Jackson, Bon Jovi and Billy Joel.

Mr Martyn Bowyer, for the prosecution, said at Southwark Crown Court that the full loss to the firm as a result of Lewis's dishonesty was £1.4 million, part of which has been recovered by insurance claims. He said Lewis had gambled all the money away and that he had no assets.

Mr Bowyer said Lewis needed to "juggle" huge sums

of money to disguise what was going on. He attempted to cover his tracks by making false entries in the books.

Ian Bourne, for the defence, said his client was a "pathological gambler" and not a seeker of the trappings of wealth. There was no evidence of fast living or of the purchase of expensive status symbols. "Every penny he could get his hands on went to the bookmakers."

Hardly a day went by "when Lewis did not put in a bet at the bookmakers". Lewis began gambling at 12 and spent his spare time studying the bloodline of racehorses.

In sentencing Lewis, Judge Paul Roke, QC, said: "You betrayed the trust of the firm you worked for and the trust of your clients."



Cyclist Malcolm Elliott lost money

RAF man denies car crash deception

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

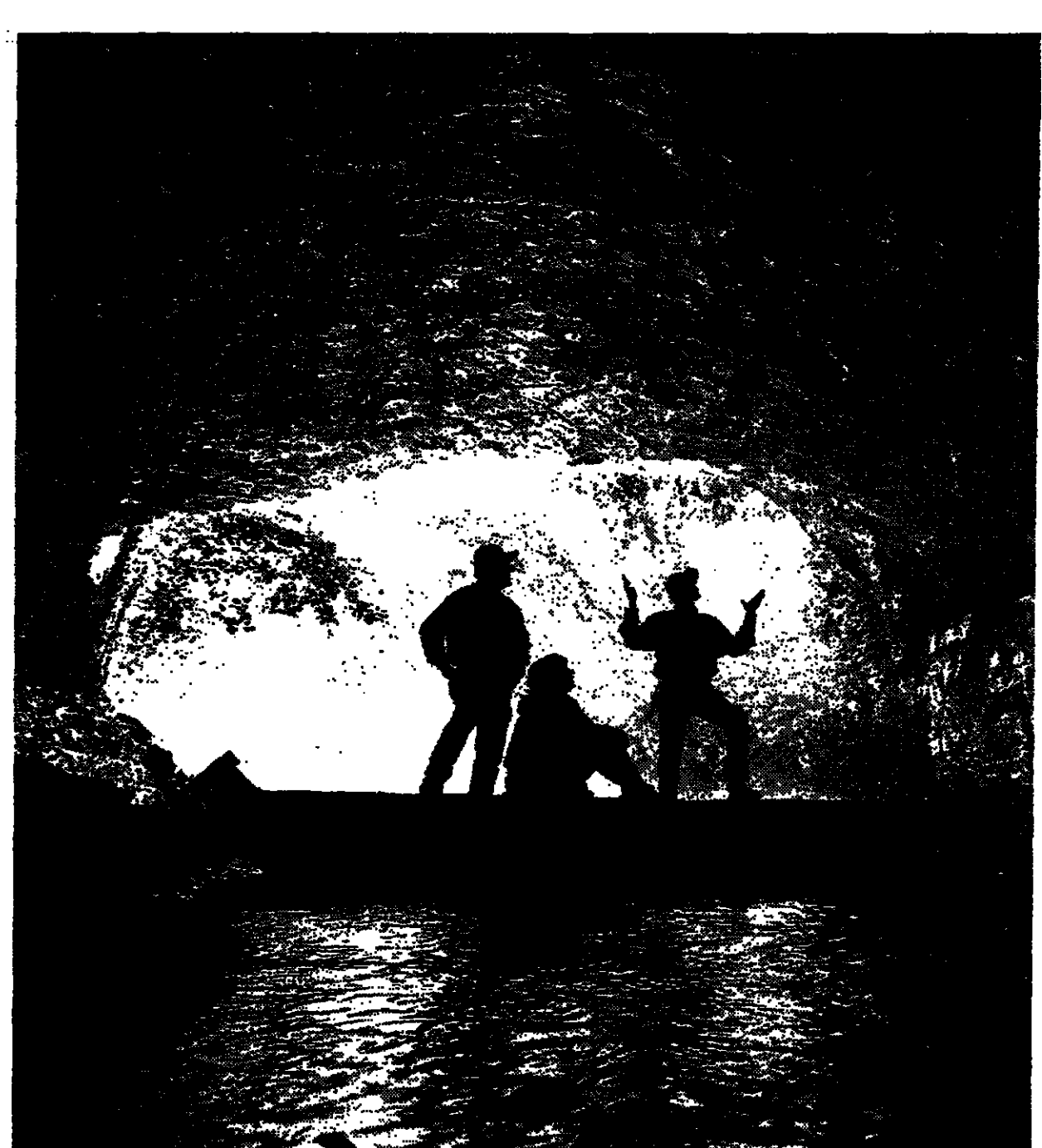
THE RAF officer accused of murdering his wife for the love of a young Serbian interpreter yesterday denied that he was "play-acting" to escape justice.

Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker told Norwich Crown Court it was untrue that he had tried to deceive emergency services attending the scene of a car crash he is alleged to have faked in a river to dispose of his wife. He said he could not remember details of the accident, which ended with his wife, Carol, 52, drowning in the River Lark in Suffolk.

He denied that he had placed himself in the water, apparently unconscious, after first throttling her and then manhandling her body out of the car. He went on to offer a new explanation for bloodstains, alleged to be his, found on her side of their Ford Fiesta after the accident on the night of July 21, 1995.

Mr Tucker said the stains on her half of the dashboard and on her door could have been caused when he cut his hand removing a dog gate from the car two or three days before her death. The prosecution alleges that the blood was transferred from a cut to his forehead as he tugged her out of the vehicle.

He admitted that he had not mentioned his explanation to police. Mr Tucker, 46, denies murdering his wife after developing a fascination for Djana Dudokovic, 21, whom he met while serving as a UN military observer in Bosnia. The trial continues.



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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Voice of racing makes one last call

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT



Sir Peter, concerned for racehorses' welfare

SIR PETER O'SULLIVAN, the "Voice of Racing" for half a century, made an impassioned plea on behalf of racehorses' welfare last night as he prepared to deliver his final BBC commentary at Newbury this afternoon.

The legendary commentator, whose gravelly tones and rapid style of delivery have endeared him to generations of racing fans, wants jockeys to use an air-cushioned whip that does not hurt horses or inflict injury. He also called on the sport to fund a group of rehabilitation centres where racehorses could

go at the end of their racing careers and be retrained as police horses, used in riding stables, or for hunting.

More than 20,000 people are expected at Newbury this afternoon as Sir Peter, 79, who delivered his first television commentary at Kempton in 1946, gives his final commentary in the Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup.

About 50 horses die each year either racing or training, while hundreds suffer injuries. There is just one centre — in Cumbria — devoted exclusively to rehabilitating racehorses, but that has only

ten boxes and is reliant on donations. "There should be official funding from racing's coffers. The important thing is to make provision before the thoroughbred starts on that slippery slope down the ladder," Sir Peter said.

He said riders should start using an air-cushioned whip designed by Jim Mahon. "It makes a noise and the horse would know he had been hit, but it can't inflict surface damage on, or as the current word, damage beneath the skin."

Simon Barnes, page 43

BY JAMES LANDALE AND POLLY NEWTON

Mr Foster denied that fox-

When Mr Foster referred to

He told hunt opponents: "What you are doing is making common criminals out of people who are engaged in an activity which has been engaged in for hundreds of years and who, in all other respects, are regarded as responsible

"It is not an exaggeration to say that, on the literal terms of this Bill, a family that goes to the park with a dog and their children and are reported as possibly being about to use that dog to chase a wild mammal, like a squirrel, can not only have their dog impounded and ... disposed of

7 BERKELEY
Uniform: Yellow cloth with green or
(masters and hunt servants only)
Evening dress: Dark blue, dark blue
velvet collar, maroon facings.
Kennels: Berkeley, Gloucestershire
pains of hounds.
Subscribers: 200 paying £300-£1,
a year each. Day visitors pay £80-
Hunt days: Wed and Sat.
History: Hounds kept at Berkeley since
12th century, at first to hunt stag and
buck. Switched to foxhunting in 18th
century. Hounds and kennels still in
Berkeley family. Country lies in
Gloucestershire and Avon. Obstacles
include, banks, ditches, hedges and
stone walls.

Mr. Clark said that the Bill made no attempt to tackle the suffering endured by animals in laboratories and on factory farms. "It is a distraction from the real and fundamental issues of animal welfare which need daily to receive attention and correction."

7 BERKELEY

Uniform: Yellow cloth with green collar (masters and hunt servants only)
Evening dress: Dark blue, dark blue velvet collar, maroon facings.
Accessories: Berkeley, Gloucestershire. 35 pairs of hounds.
Subscription: 200 paying £300-£1,500 a year each. Day visitors pay £80-£100. Hunt days: Wed and Sat.
History: Hounds kept at Berkeley since 12th century, at first to hunt stag and buck. Switched to foxhunting in 18th century. Hounds and kennels still owned by Berkeley family. Country lies in Gloucestershire and Avon. Obstacles include banks, ditches, hedges and stone walls.

5 **PUCKERIDGE**
Distinctive collar: None.
Breeding season: Red coat. No special facings.
Kennels: Buntingford, Hertfordshire. **35**
Years of breeding: 1950s.
Subscribers: 60 paying £60-£600 a year each. Day visitors pay £25-£50.
Hunt days: Wed and Sat.
History: Dates from 1725. Country straddles Hertfordshire, Essex and Cambridgeshire. Numerous banks and blind ditches require skilled riding on well-bred horses.

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- ★ **Starbonds:** 11 packs. Hunt hares. Foot followers only.
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- **Stagbonds:** 3 packs. Trained to hunt deer. Mounted followers.
- **Greybonds:** 15 packs. Follow scent. Mounted followers.
- **Drawbonds:** 17 packs. No liss size. Follow artificial scented trail. Mounted followers.

BY JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

He declared that although he did not hunt, he did shoot and fish, and claimed that the Bill was part of a plan by the animal welfare lobby to ban these sports in the future.

The rich would not suffer from the Bill, he said, because they would go abroad to hunt, but working-class people would be harmed. "How is it that a party which spends most of its life arguing about the creation of jobs, in one piece of legislation is going to decimate the jobs throughout some of the more remote and fragile

**Michael Heseltine, left,
and John Gummer**

Accusing Labour of wanting to protect pregnant foxes while supporting greater abortion rights, he said: "I find the comments made about pregnant foxes come ill from the party opposite, which votes one week to protect the fox, and to kill babies the next week."

He added: "In a civilised society, you do allow people to do things which you don't approve of yourself."

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Hoey and Widdecombe defy convention

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

TWO of Parliament's most independent-minded women, Ann Widdecombe and Kate Hoey, risked the wrath of party colleagues with impassioned speeches on the hunting debate. Miss Widdecombe, Conservative MP for Maidstone and The Weald, delighted Labour backbenchers with a vigorous attack on hunting with hounds, after Ms Hoey, Labour MP for Vauxhall, won the respect of many Tories for her eloquent opposition to a ban. The clash defied conventional wisdom about the politics of hunting and showed the strength of feeling on both sides.

Ms Hoey told the House the sad tale of two guinea pigs which had been killed by a fox two nights ago barely a mile from Westminster. Ms Hoey, who was born on a small farm and brought up in the country, said she had never hunted "but I do understand the reasons for it and the benefits it can bring to rural communities".

She was a supporter of animal welfare, she said, but "I have a very vivid memory of the sight early one morning in the fields of a sea of white feathers all over the grass — the result of a fox excursion into the chicken house — not just one to eat but every single one routed and killed. So don't give me any more romantic ideas of the pretty little innocent foxes. They are pests and they need to be controlled".

She said that many woods and hedgerows would be destroyed were hunting banned. Farmers would put up barbed wire to divide fields because it was the cheapest option.

Ms Hoey had Tory MPs roaring with approval when she said: "I cannot understand why a country that prides itself on its pluralism and tolerance...



Hester Cooper with the body of Tufty, killed by a fox

Martyrs' death for guinea pigs

By PAUL WHITTAKER

HESTER COOPER'S pet guinea pigs — slaughtered by a fox within a bugle call of the Houses of Parliament three days ago — became the unlikely martyrs of pro-hunt campaigners during the Commons debate yesterday.

Members who voted for the ban were made to feel they had the blood of Surprise, a smooth white two-year-old, and Tufty, nine months and furry black, on their hands as Kate Hoey, a rare animal indeed as one of the few Labour MPs to oppose the Bill to ban foxhunting, informed the House of their untimely deaths on Wednesday afternoon in her constituency of Vauxhall across the river in South London.

Hester, 11, was mourning the loss of her two favourite pets yesterday. "It's very upsetting," she said. "I lost another guinea pig three years ago to a fox."

Hester, a student at St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, said she was glad the matter had been raised in Parliament and hoped her pets' deaths would not be in vain.

"People should know that, even if they do ban hunting, it will not stop the foxes in London," she said.



Surprise, left, and Tufty in their hutch in the Coopers' garden

"They are not killed here but captured and released in the country, where they can cause harm to other animals such as newborn lambs."

Hester's sister, Daisy, 14, discovered the bodies after returning home from school. Although no one saw the culprit, their mother, Janet, said she knew that a fox was to blame. "Their smell is everywhere."

The family's hounds — well, three pet dogs — were locked up at the time and unable to fend off the attacker, who got into the guinea pigs' cage, biting the neck of one. Today Hester will bury Surprise in

upsetting. We have regular meetings to discuss the fox problem."

Mrs Cooper, who said that her husband and children had taken part in foxhunts, accused Michael Foster, MP for Worcester, sponsor of the Private Member's Bill to ban hunting with dogs, of conducting a publicity stunt.

"We have a very urban Parliament. I'm sure Mr Foster wouldn't mind if it were rats were being chased by dogs, because they aren't quite as cute as foxes," she said.

Mrs Cooper, a mother of three, added that she believed foxhunting was the most humane way of controlling foxes. "The hounds will either kill them or they won't. They are not wounded. The trouble with foxes in towns is that their only predator is man, and nobody will kill them. They are very effective breeders, having two to three cubs a year."

"I believe in the balance of nature. I don't think foxes should be made extinct, but they need to be controlled, not only in the country but also here in the city."

Hester said she did not attend hants for the fun of killing a fox, but because she enjoyed riding her horse and seeing the countryside. "The fox dies within three seconds," she said.

How the world has outfoxed Britain

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS AND ROGER BOYES IN BONN

BRITAIN appears alone in seeking to abandon the ancient hunting ritual with its hunting pink and packs of hounds.

The French are wildly enthusiastic. America can muster a surprising 163 packs of hounds and there are 23 packs in Australia and 13 in Canada. South Africa has two packs and Kenya and India one each.

Killing animals for sport in France is a right enshrined in the Revolution, a pastime to which aristocrats and peasants are equally wedded. It is tradition that politicians tamper with at their peril.

There are 1.5 million hunt

enthusiasts of all types in France, more than any other European country and almost three times as many as in Britain. In France almost anything that flies, runs, hops or swims is hunted and — almost always — consumed in a heavy sauce.

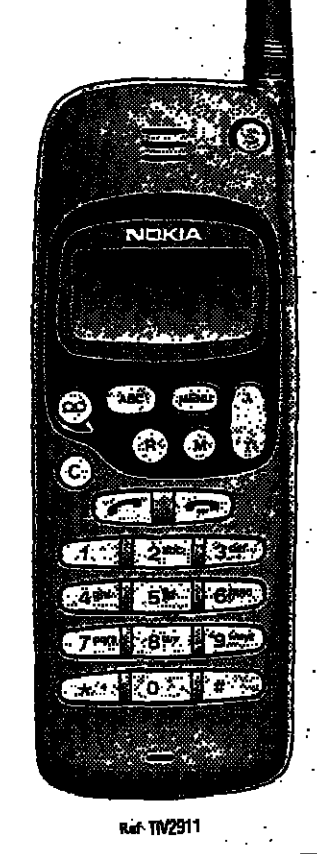
In a recent study, sociologists Michel and Monique Pinçon found that French stag hunters, numbering some 60,000 in total, included "dukes and bankers along with street sweepers and postal workers". Fully 50,000 French people turn out to watch and applaud the hunt at least once a year, but never climb on a horse themselves.

The Pinçons' three-year study concluded that hunting has never been more popular in France.

The French routinely defy EU regulations on when and what to hunt, and any attempts to restrict hunting, however tentative, have been met with strenuous and vocal opposition as an assault on French rural tradition.

In Germany, hunting on horseback is rare and the sport is confined to the killing of animals with guns. About 8,000 people a year pass the hunting examination. Candidates must know about animal biology, the different woodland species, trees, animal excrement, how to keep a gun clean, read tracks, gun law and environmental policies. Some hunting songs also have to be memorised.

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The average annual bag is one million red deer, 330,000 wild boar, 66,000 roe deer, 35,000 fallow deer. Tens of thousands of foxes are killed but exact numbers not available.

Among the most famous German hunt enthusiasts was Hermann Goering, who burnt down 100 Polish villages to make a nicely sized hunting terrain in the Bialowieza forests. Goering's last bag, on his German estate, was four bison, shot in April 1945 as the Russians were moving into Berlin.

Foxhunting in the full English tradition still flourishes in northern Virginia. Next Saturday in the small town of Middleburg, the local hunt, resplendent in scarlet and accompanied by foxhounds, will ride down the main street at the head of the Christmas parade before taking off across the fields in search of a fox.

"I'm really surprised that England is trying to outlaw foxhunting," said John Kelly, a patrolman with Middleburg police. He suggested that Britons benefit of their sport would be welcome to join the wealthy horsey set in Virginia.



Goering: burnt down 100 villages for hunting

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Prior engagements keep half cabinet from House

They comprise half the Cabinet members who sit in the Commons. The Prime

Minister, who is in favour of the ban, was in Bosnia. John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, was in Australia before the Kyoto environment conference. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, was in Poland. Gordon Brown had wanted to vote in favour of the ban, but rushed off to his East Dunfermline constituency to try to save a high-tech investment in the

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, was in his Blackburn constituency. Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, was in Nottingham and Donald Dewar, the Scottish Secretary, was in Scotland. David Blunket, the Education Secretary, was in his Sheffield constituency. Clare Short was in Brussels and Frank Dobson was in Plymouth.

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THE BEAR BAIT
SEASON STAR
IN NOVEMBER

Gifts for Sandhurst staff investigated

NCOs have been suspended after an Arab officer cadet complained his presents failed to induce instructors to pass him, Michael Evans reports

THREE senior NCOs who have been suspended during an investigation at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, are alleged to have received gifts from foreign students that breached a limit of £50. The gifts are said to have included Rolex watches and cash.

Seven NCOs are under investigation; the four others are continuing with their jobs at the Army's training college. If the allegations against them are proved, they are likely to face disciplinary action.

The investigation follows a complaint by an officer cadet from an Arab royal family. He made it clear that he had handed over gifts on his personal understanding that they would persuade his NCO instructors to ensure that he passed out with good grades.

The Royal Military Police Special Investigations Branch was brought in when the cadet, believed to be from a

Gulf state, was told he had failed and would not be able to pass out at the Sovereign's Parade.

Ten per cent of the officer cadets who take part in the parade at three ceremonies a year come from overseas, many of them from Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

It is a tradition in that part of the world, and in Africa, for royal families and other ruling elites to send their sons to Sandhurst. It is also a tradition, as part of their culture, to offer gifts as a mark of thanks to individual NCO instructors once they have completed their course.

Famous foreigners trained at Sandhurst include kings, princes, coup leaders and wealthy civilians. Among the latter was Dodi Fayed, son of the Harrods owner and friend of Diana, Princess of Wales. Mr Fayed passed out from Sandhurst in 1974.

The academy, whose Commandant for the past six weeks has been Major-General Arthur Denaro, a former SAS officer who commanded the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars in the Gulf War, is acutely aware of the gift-giving tradition and sets down strict rules about the conditions under which presents can be accepted. They state that while it is not prohibited to receive small gifts by way of thanks, anything that has a value of more than £50 has to be declared and retained by the Ministry of Defence.

Although the allegations against the NCOs are being treated seriously — the three



Present... chocolates!!

suspended are believed to be colour sergeants — it is accepted that an inadequate student who believes he can bribe his way into passing out at the Sovereign's Parade is deceiving himself.

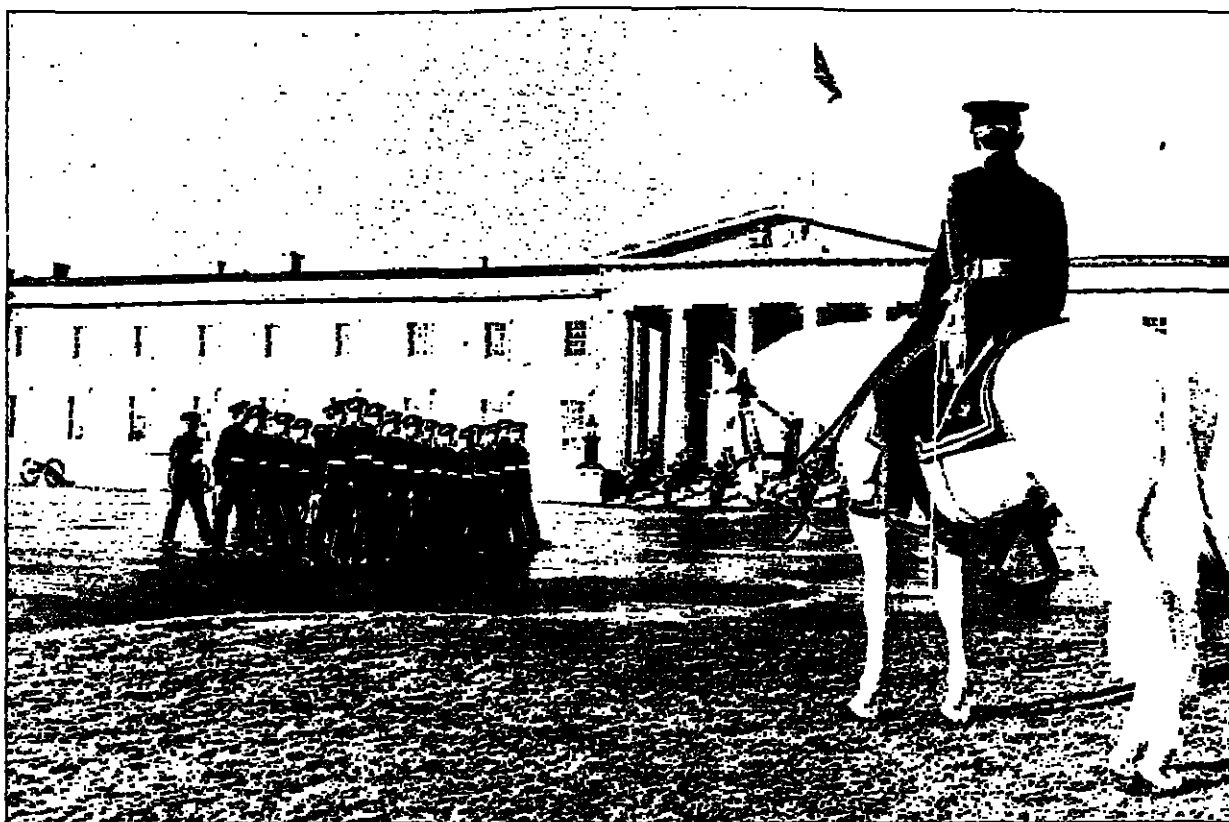
One of the accused NCOs said: "It is no different to giving tips in a restaurant or bribing the binman or postman at Christmas. You don't

expect better service, it's just a way of saying thanks. It is rubbish to say we were selling favours. The very fact that he didn't get the grades he expected is surely proof of that."

He added: "If you were to look back at the college's 200-year history, I am sure you could find lots of aristocrats who have splashed cash about in the hope of improving their lot. But now it has come to light, some good instructors are going to end up being booed out of the Army just for accepting the gratitude of foreign students who can well afford it."

As a result of the military police investigation, several students from Arab countries who had passed out were interviewed. They disclosed that they had handed over gifts and the homes of all seven NCOs were searched. Army sources denied reports that the gifts involved cars or anything of such substantial value.

They also said that when



Ten per cent of the officer cadets passing out at the Sovereign's Parade at Sandhurst are from foreign countries

parade was on August 11, when Field Marshal Lord Bramall, former Chief of the Defence Staff, represented the Queen. Twenty-five overseas students passed out with a view to being commissioned in the armed forces of their countries. They included

Sheikh Salman Abdullah al Khalifa from Bahrain, Saleh Ghalib al Qatit from Saudi Arabia, Saleh Abdullah al Dahmani from the United Arab Emirates, and Mohammed Ali Jaber al Marri from Qatar.

The next parade will be on

December 12, when between 200 and 250 officer cadets will pass out, and again about 10 per cent of them will be from overseas. At any one time there are about 800 students at the academy and the permanent staff consists of 50 officers and 80 NCOs.



Denaro: Commandant for the past six weeks

British soldiers damaged hotel

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

TWO British soldiers who had been absent without leave since October will be sentenced next week for causing £20,000 damage to a five-star hotel in Cyprus.

Another British soldier is to be sentenced for a spate of burglaries on the island. A fourth, who has been absent without leave since May, is wanted in connection with the burglaries. All four were serv-

ing with the 1st Battalion King's Regiment. After drinking in several pubs, Privates Carl Townes and Philip Hughes, both 19, broke into the accounts office of the Palm Beach Hotel and caused the damage, a court in Larnaca heard yesterday. Both had pleaded guilty. In a separate case, Private Keith Hollywood, 23, pleaded guilty to four burglaries.



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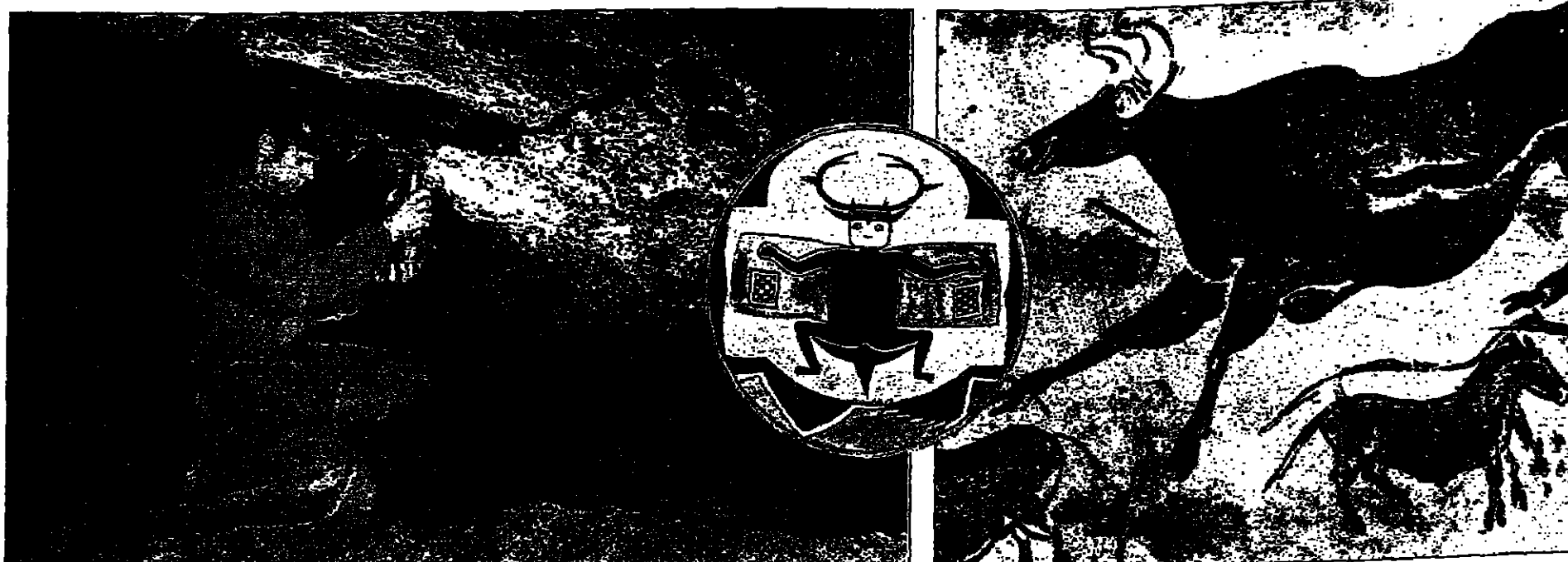
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Shades of yesteryear unearthed

Forest of Dean
ochre miners are
back in business,
reports Simon
de Bruxelles



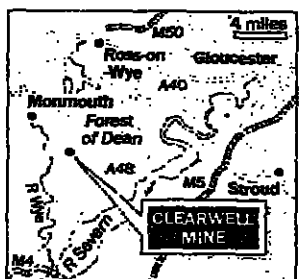
Ochre such as that mined by Jonathan Wright was used in Stone Age paintings. Modern examples, above, were produced on courses run by the Clearwell Caves museum

THREE hundred feet below ground, in the bowels of Britain's only ochre mine, a man with a pickaxe chips away at a deposit of rust-coloured mineral. A few handfuls of precious powder are placed in a sack and the miner crawls back towards daylight. A revolution in DIY has created a demand for the pigment not seen since the Late Middle Ages as older homes are restored using the same techniques and materials with which they were built. Several large paint manu-

facturers now boast "heritage" paints which claim to reproduce the colours of the past. The National Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum have each given their imprimatur to rival ranges. The resurgence of traditional painting techniques using naturally occurring materials coincides with the growing interest in the "period" end of the homes market reflected in television programmes such as *The House Detectives* and Channel 5's *Period Rooms*. The monthly magazine *Period*

Living has increased its circulation 56 per cent year on year to more than 100,000. Amateur restorers are once again using distempers, lime washes and other materials. They are reaping the benefit at the Clearwell Caves ochre mine near Coleford in Gloucestershire. The caves were reopened to the public 30 years ago as a museum, but the renewed demand for ochre means Clearwell is once again a working pit. Ochre is an oxide of iron deposited millennia ago by

mineral-rich waters percolating through the limestone caverns below the Forest of Dean. Its earthy palette ranges through browns and reds to yellow and deep purple and its use as a pigment is as old as art itself. Ochre coloured the Lascaux cave paintings and medieval church frescoes, decorated the homes of Iron Age farmers and was used in the burial rituals of Stone Age man. Jonathan Wright, 37, is one of the Forest of Dean's few remaining Freemaners who,



for more than 700 years, have enjoyed the right to extract minerals including iron ore and coal. He said: "Demand

has grown by more than 25 per cent in the past two years alone. People who have older houses want to use the old materials and modern paint ranges — even if they claim to be traditional colours — can't match it. Ochre is particularly appropriate to homes with a lot of wood and stone in them because it is a completely natural product. It is also completely harmless, both to people and the environment." The mine produces just three or four tonnes of ochre a

year, which is sold in 250ml jars at £10 each. Production is carefully paced, as no one knows how much more is down there. Jane Knapp, an expert on decorative paint techniques who is working on the restoration of the banqueting hall at Longleat, Wiltshire, says her clients nearly all prefer traditional materials. She is often asked for lime washes and "size" — a glaze made with crystals from rabbit skin. "You only have to look at the magazine rack in W.H. Smith

to see that it's a rapidly expanding market. As we approach the millennium everyone is looking backwards. We seem desperate to hang on to the past," she added. Patrick Baty, an authority on traditional painting materials and an adviser to English Heritage, says older-style materials may be more appropriate for period homes, particularly because they allow walls to "breathe", preventing damp, but they are not necessarily the easiest to use or the cheapest.

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Britain is still a Christian nation insists Carey

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has criticised the view of Britain as a multi-faith society, insisting that the coronation service of the Prince of Wales will be Christian. In a magazine interview, Dr George Carey says that British society is fundamentally Christian and any form of inter-faith worship is wrong. Dr Carey's views are published in *Third Way*, a monthly evangelical Christian magazine. He also gave his view on abortion, saying that it is not always wrong. Speaking to Huw Spanner, consulting editor of *Third Way*, Dr Carey says that British society is not pluralist. "We mustn't concede the game to being a multi-faith society. We are not. Other faiths comprise less than 10 per cent of the population. So, 90 per cent are still rooted in a Christian position." He says he will not compromise on central Christian beliefs. "I do not agree with inter-faith worship. And other faiths don't like it either. You won't find a Muslim who would want it." His comments challenge the views of the Prince, who has said that he wishes to be

seen as "Defender of Faith" rather than "the Faith" when he succeeds the Queen to the throne and becomes Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Asked about the coronation, Dr Carey says: "It will inevitably be a Christian service." He makes it clear that, in talking with people of other faiths, he does not stint on the biblical injunction to evangelise. "In my commitment to dialogue between the religions, I have been much up-front in emphasising the uniqueness of Christ," he says. Dr Carey adds: "Inter-faith dialogue is important — do not minimise that. But I am unapologetic in my commitment to evangelism." On abortion he says: "I, and most Anglicans, would go as far in being for life as I possibly can, but I can't say that abortion is always wrong. That is where the Anglican position takes us." The General Synod of the Church of England debated the plight of asylum-seekers yesterday. It expressed concern about last year's asylum and immigration Act, calling for a "fairer, firmer, faster" system.

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Scar-free breast surgery perfected

British team unveil breakthrough in keyhole technique that could benefit 6,000 women a year having mastectomies, reports Ian Murray

BRITISH surgeons have perfected a keyhole surgery technique which allows them to remove a breast tumour and rebuild the breast afterwards in one four-hour operation. After the wound heals it is almost impossible to tell the operation ever happened.

The technique has been developed by Richard Rainsbury, a senior tutor on advanced breast disease at the Royal College of Surgeons, and Paul Pezner, his colleague at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital in Winchester. Their method was explained yesterday at a meeting of the British Association of Surgical Oncology.

The aim of the operation is to leave the patient's skin as undamaged as possible. An incision no more than about six centimetres long is made around the nipple and the tumour is removed through it. This leaves the skin of the breast hanging empty. The

surgeon then makes another incision in the patient's back, raising a flap along a line which will be covered by a bikini or bra strap. Through this he frees one of the four muscles which bring the arm down to the side.

The muscle is then slid around inside the body, rotated under the armpit and dropped into the empty breast, where it is sewn into place along with a little disc of skin to replace the nipple.

If required, a tissue expander, such as a silicone or saline implant, is inserted under the muscle to make the reconstructed breast match the healthy one.

Loss of the muscle which is used to fill the breast causes only minor problems. "It can make it difficult for someone doing cross-country skiing or getting out of the bath," Mr Rainsbury said.

Once the wound has healed, the nipple can be reconstructed by an operation done in day surgery and the scarred skin tattooed to a natural colour.

THE "SCARLESS" MASTECTOMY

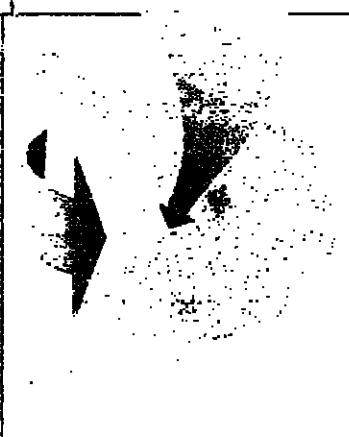


Incision is made around nipple and both nipple and tumour removed through central incision



Circular patch of skin and muscle taken from patient's back is slid round body then through the armpit into breast

Nipple can now be reconstructed and seated on the new patch of skin



Muscle carefully stitched into breast pocket and new circular skin patch fits in the "hole". A saline or silicone implant may be used to make both breasts match

ed by an operation done in day surgery and the scarred skin tattooed to a natural colour. "The procedure of removing the tumour and getting the reconstruction done immediately has surgical, psychological and financial advantages," Mr Rainsbury said.

"Surgically it is easier because you are not working with scarred tissue when you carry out the reconstruction and the whole process is speeded up because there is no need to re-examine the patient before a second operation. "Psychologically, it helps the patient, who does not have to worry about whether to have a second operation and

face all the discomfort involved. Although there is little data about this, it is likely that being able to have an immediate reconstruction will improve women's attitude to the disease. "Financially, the cost of performing just one operation instead of two will mean a minimum saving to the National Health Service of £1,000 per patient."

Mr Rainsbury said that surgeons now needed to be trained in the new technique. Around 6,000 of the 10,000 women a year who have mastectomies could benefit from the operation, but only a handful of surgeons are so far capable of performing it.

New treatment for advanced meningitis

By Audrey Magee, Ireland Correspondent

DOCTORS in Ireland claim to have found an improved treatment for meningococcal septicaemia, a disease that kills half the patients affected and damages survivors' limbs and organs.

The doctors, whose findings are published in the current edition of *The Lancet*, claim to have saved 12 meningitis patients close to death by giving them Protein C, a natural blood-thinning enzyme. About 300 people died of meningitis in England and Wales last year. Meningococcal meningitis is the most life-threatening form of the disease, responsible for over half of the cases of bacterial meningitis.

Owen Smith and his team, from the National Children's Hospital and St James's Hospital in Dublin, administered the protein intravenously to the patients in hospitals around the city. None of the 12 patients, aged between three months and

27 years, died. Two patients suffered amputations and one had chronic renal failure. "The patients not only survived but we also prevented a lot of the complications that you see in patients that survive such as skin grafts, amputations and renal disease," Dr Owen said.

He used Protein C, as well as the accepted treatments for critically ill meningitis patients, such as antibiotics, other anti-coagulants and fluid to flush out the system. He believes that Protein C works by counteracting the thrombosis prevalent when the meningococcal bacteria enter the bloodstream. Blood-clotting usually indicates that a patient is near death.

Dr Owen emphasises that early treatment with antibiotics remains the best way of treating meningitis, but suggests Protein C for the later stages of the illness. He said that further research was required.

Britain is still a Christian nation insists Carey

IN BRIEF

Man dead in cell was suicide risk

David Jenkins, 28, of Hiram in Glamorgan, who was found dead in his cell on Thursday at the recently opened Securicor-managed Parc jail near Bridgend while awaiting sentence, had slashed his throat in a magistrate's court two months ago, it was disclosed.

Arson boy held

A 12-year-old boy who set fire to a school because he had a grudge against the headmaster was ordered to serve two years in detention by a judge at Bolton Crown Court.

Fourth life term

Frederick Low, 41, received his fourth life sentence for the murder of Norman Manning, 26, a fellow prisoner, in a row over a piano lesson at Long Lartin jail.

Support club

Birmingham City Football Club has had a special seat built at St Andrew's stadium so that 50-stone Barry Austen, 29, will be able to watch his favourite team play Portsmouth today.

Fresh move to ban lakeland powerboats

By Michael Hornsby

A DECISION by the former Environment Secretary, John Gummer, not to ban powerboating and water-skiing on Windermere has been quashed by the High Court, which had heard complaints that he acted without giving adequate reasons.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister and Mr Gummer's successor, decided not to contest an application for a judicial review submitted by the Lake District National Park and will now reconsider the case for a ban.

The park authorities last year proposed amending a bylaw so as to impose a 10mph speed limit on power-driven boats. It said the limit, which would effectively stop water-skiing and jet-skiing, was needed to allow the majority of visitors and residents to enjoy the lake in peace and safety.

Mr Gummer refused to confirm the new bylaw despite the conclusion of an independent inspector that there was a "fundamental problem of incompatibility" between fast boats and other users. About 7,000 powerboats are registered annually to use Windermere, which is 10½ miles long. At busy times as many as 1,500 craft are on the water.

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Henry VIII is culinary shape of the future



Game is on again as Britain gets a taste for Tudor cooking, writes Robin Young

THE sort of food that sustained Henry VIII is returning to the dinner and restaurant table.

The revival of Old English fare is the coming culinary trend as sales foretell the end of the so-called new British cuisine, which draws inspiration from continental, Far Eastern and American dishes. Sales of venison, boar and rabbit are rocketing, supermarkets report, as cooks turn to the sort of food that would have been enjoyed by Henry and his court.

Dishes such as venison pie and rabbit stew have re-established themselves as favourites; saddle of rabbit often appears on restaurant menus; wild boar farmers are reporting record sales; and it may only be time before haunch of venison supplants beef once more as the Sunday roast. Tesco is now canvassing farmers to consider stocking herds of deer to supply the rapidly growing "market". Tesco's sales of rabbit have more than doubled in the past 12 months. Steve Murrells, Tesco's meat category controller, said yesterday: "All enthusiastic cooks have been through the gamut of dishes from France, Italy and China. Now they are looking for something different and finding the answer on their own doorstep. The rich flavours of old English cooking are amazing and certainly as good as any of the traditional dishes from the French countryside."

Safeway, which has been selling wild Scottish venison for more than three years, said that demand was still rising steadily. Sainsbury's has recently increased its intake of venison from English deer parks.

The revival of traditional English cookery is welcomed by Kit Chapman, proprietor of the Castle Hotel in Taunton, Somerset, and his chef, Phil Vickery. Mr Vickery's revivalist recipes include such delights as roast scallops with bubble and squeak, haunch of venison with chestnuts and prunes, and steamed spiced lamb pudding. He said yesterday: "Braised rabbit legs, braised ox tongue and venison meatballs sell out as bar food."

The trend is also hailed by the television chef Gary Rhodes, who

is shortly to launch a range of "restaurant quality" ready-meals, manufactured by Hazlewood Foods. They include such historic British staples as salmon fish cakes, pork sausages in onion gravy, lamb hotpot, beef stew and dumplings and braised oxtail.

Sales of wild boar are increasing, but principally through specialist meat producers. There are not yet enough supplies for supermarkets. Rabbit, on the other hand, is available at most butchers' counters, though cheap imports from China are no longer available. Much of the rabbit meat on the market now is home-produced.

Dietitians are concerned at the thought of a return to Tudor traditions, though, because it has been calculated that Henry VIII's daily consumption totalled at least 5,000 calories, about double today's average. One popular Tudor recipe, Great Pie, involved a cholesterol-laden blend of woodcock, suet, dates, chicken, prunes, raisins, duck and egg yolks. The Tudor period was the first in which Britons limited themselves largely to three regular meals a day.

"Whereas of old we had breakfasts in the forenoon, beverages or munchions after dinner, and thereto rear-suppers generally when it was time to go to rest, now these old repasts, thanked be to God, are very well left," wrote one commentator.

Peter Brears, the food historian who wrote English Heritage's booklet on food in 16th-century Britain, describes a standard meal for the Tudor monarchs as likely to contain "loynes of Veale, cold Capon, Beefe and Goose, with Pygeon pyes and Mutton coide, Neates tongs powdered well, and Gambones of the Hogge, then Saillages and savery knackes".

The main meal would often be followed by an elaborate dessert course of sweetmeats, fruit and wine, displaying as much as possible of wealth, colour, ingenuity and culinary splendour.

Amanda Urrell, a nutritional consultant, said yesterday: "Venison and game are relatively healthy alternatives to other red meat as they tend to be leaner, and



Lemons were a favourite Italian, if not English, ingredient

are particularly good sources of iron and zinc, but 400g a day is quite enough. People were much more active in the 16th century and did not have central heating."

Another popular conceit of Tudor times was the surprise pie, baked with one compartment "blind", filled with flour and beans which could be discarded when baking was complete. Thereafter a

live snake, a couple of mice, or some blackbirds could be concealed in the empty compartment, to make their appearance at the table when the pie was served. Such pies were the origin of the nursery rhyme about the four and twenty blackbirds, but the birds are now a protected species.

Leading article, page 23



A 16th-century Italian view of *The Marriage Feast at Cana*. Such scenes of historical pageantry are the material for *The Banquet*, a novel by Orazio Bagnasco

All the ingredients for a truly murderous plot

Richard Owen on a gastronomic thriller for Italian tastebuds

AS WINTER sets in and the shops fill with seasonal foods, Italy is being gripped by its first "gastronomic thriller", set in the sumptuous and dangerous world of Renaissance intrigue.

Called simply *The Banquet*, the novel offers a unique blend of late 15th-century power play, historical pageantry and lovingly described food and drink — a heady mixture of power, passion and recipes, as one reviewer put it.

The book, by Orazio Bagnasco — himself a colourful character with past links to both Italian high finance and the Far Left — is a

The Banquet. "What is most delicious can also be most treacherous," Bagnasco said. "That goes for food, women and a lot else."

Bagnasco, 69, was born in Genoa, not far from the site of the fabled 1488 wedding banquet at Tortona Castle. Politics, banking and antiquarian books aside, his

time in the history of the human race. "Above all it was a world of fine food. I regard the art of the kitchen as a metaphor for the human comedy," he said. He tried out most of the recipes in his own kitchen, including pheasant breast pie, pigeon pie and a "potage of chicken livers and cocks' combs".

One murder takes place while turtle doves and larks are emerging from a remarkable confection consisting of towers and battlements made of marzipan and nougat. The real banquet was held for the wedding of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, the 20-year-old Duke of Milan, and Isabella of Aragon, the 18-year-old daughter of King Alfonso of Naples. The wine glasses were made of special glass designed to "shatter if it came into contact with poison". Nonetheless, in Bagnasco's story, five people die in the course of the feast. In reality, Gian Galeazzo died in suspicious circumstances, but not until four years later.

In Bagnasco's view, "all roads lead to the kitchen. If you know what people ate, and how they ate it, you will have understood the essentials of the society they lived in."

Conscious of the Umberto Eco analogy, he says he has "tried to reconstruct a period which is truer than Eco's Middle Ages, where no one seems to do anything but sing Gregorian chants all day."

Il Banquetto is published in Italian by Mondadori in Milan. It is not yet available in English. Bagnasco is working on his next project, a murder mystery set in 18th-century Venice.

Smothered rabbit

Take a Pipkin, a porridge of water, two or three spoonfuls of Verjus, ten Onions filled, and if they be great quarter them, mingle as much Pepper and salt as will season them, and rub it upon the rabbit; put in a piece of butter in the belly and a piece in the broth, and a few Currans if you will, stop your pot close and seethe it with a soft fire but no far under the bottom, then when it is sodden serve it in upon soppes and lay a few Barberries upon the dish.

From *The Good Housewife's Treasury*

secret passion is gastronomy. Founder of the International Library of Gastronomy at Lugano, Switzerland, he spent two years gathering material for *The Banquet*.

In an attempt to bring alive "the world of the senses" of 500 years ago, he has drawn on the paintings of the time, its documents, fashion, jewels, weaponry and dances. "It was a world of power and violence, where there were no limits to either," he said. "It was a world where a few people had more than anyone had ever had at any other

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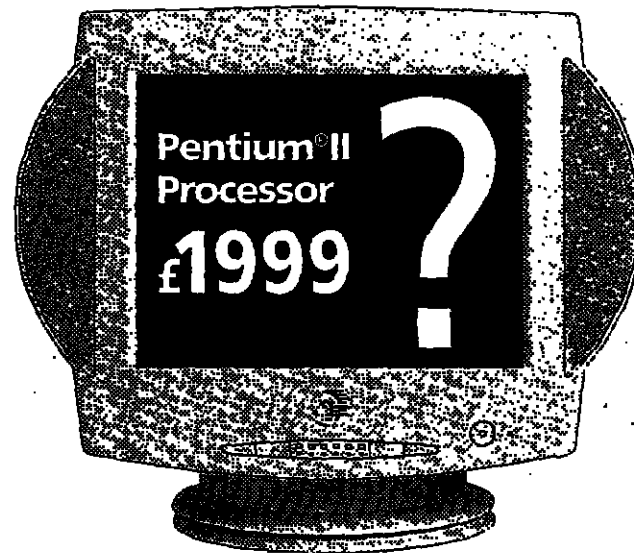
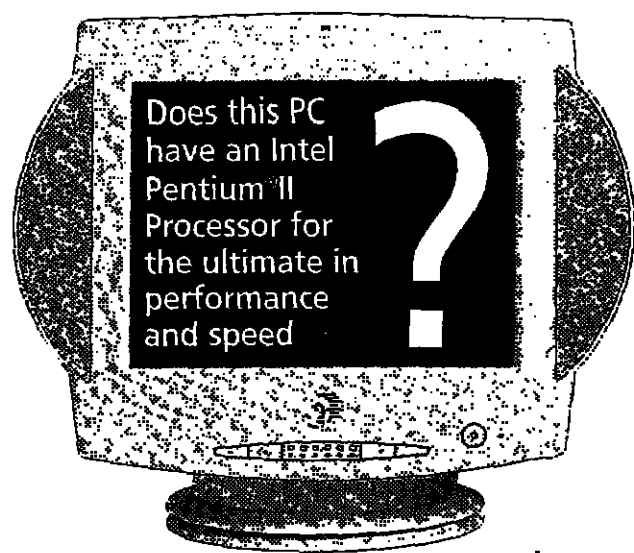
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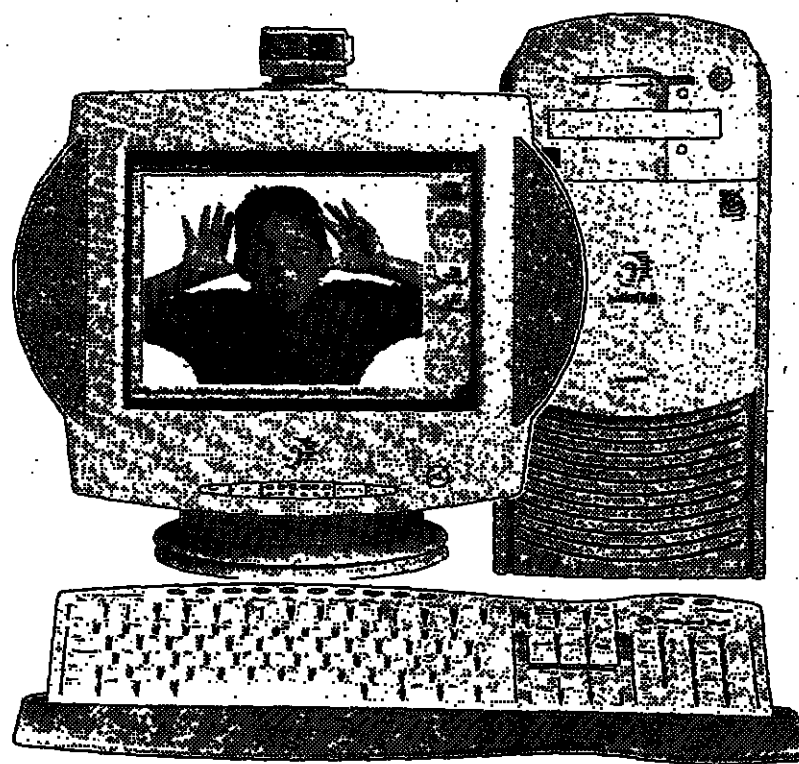
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all this.

Apartheid lies 'were spread by Glasgow agent'

FROM SAM KILEY IN JOHANNESBURG

another journalist. Mr Erasmus was asked outside the hearing if he remembered any particular successes. He cited a 1991 leading article in *The Times*, "Get Your House in Order".

50

Mob power is a familiar tactic in Pakistan: for politicians to use it against the respected Supreme Court is unprecedented.

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 750 million to 850 million. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 900 million by the year 2015. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 950 million by the year 2020. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1 billion by the year 2025. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.1 billion by the year 2030. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.2 billion by the year 2035. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.3 billion by the year 2040. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.4 billion by the year 2045. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.5 billion by the year 2050. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.6 billion by the year 2055. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.7 billion by the year 2060. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.8 billion by the year 2065. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 1.9 billion by the year 2070. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2 billion by the year 2075. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2.1 billion by the year 2080. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2.2 billion by the year 2085. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2.3 billion by the year 2090. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2.4 billion by the year 2095. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to increase to 2.5 billion by the year 2100.

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Black comic stands up for irreverence

"YOU know what I like about Clinton? He's got real problems, like you and me. He's runnin' out of money. His wife's a pain. All his friends are goin' to jail. If Clinton spent a \$100 bill, someone would put it up to the light. It's almost as if we have a black President."

These are the musings of Chris Rock, a comedian described by *The New York Times* recently as "probably the funniest and smartest comedian working today in America".

Rock, a 31-year-old New Yorker, styles himself as an equal opportunities offender, which means that he is rude about everyone, everything, and every race — particularly blacks. He has often said that blacks are

TUNKU VARADARAJAN'S NEW YORK



more racist than whites, "because black people even hate black people".

Bill Cosby, the paterfamilias of all blacks in showbusiness, will not speak to him, so unamused is he by Rock's roughshod irreverence. Marion Barry, Washington's Mayor, will not speak to him either, because Rock once quipped, at the time of the Million Man March on the capital, that

"even in our finest hour, we had a crack-head on stage". Not surprisingly, the Rev Al Sharpton, the firebrand black leader from New York, also detests Rock, as does O.J. Simpson, whom he has pilloried mercilessly.

Writing about Simpson's acquittal in his recently published book of comedic philosophy, *Rock This!*, Rock declared: "I ain't seen white people that mad since they cancelled M*A*S*H."

The tiny comedian is being hailed here as the new Eddie Murphy, a title from which he tries to distance himself. True, Murphy was Rock's mentor, and still is his biggest fan, but the new kid on the block has a newer, rarer tale to tell. He's Chris Rock, and already worth several million.



Chris Rock, the self-styled equal opportunities offender, speaking at a press conference earlier this year during nominations for the 1997 MTV awards

Mayor puts a stop to bus adverts

LAST week, *New York* magazine thought that it had the perfect publicity banner. Scores of city buses were set to roll out of their garages with a commercial message painted on their sides, declaring the magazine to be "Possibly the only thing in New York Rudy hasn't taken credit for".

However, the Rudy in question, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, was so angered by this *lese-majesty* that he leaned on the bus company to pull the offending ads. Meekly, the company complied.

New York has sued Mr Giuliani, saying that its

freedom of expression has been curtailed unlawfully. The Mayor countered: "If they want to take me and use me to sell their magazine, they have to get my permission." The trial begins soon.

A 66-year-old businessman was honoured here recently by the Irish-American community. Charles Feeney, a philanthropist, has donated \$610 million to universities, medical centres and "others in need". This last category, however, is not as innocuous as it seems. Mr Feeney finances the Washington office of Sinn Féin.

Obscurity on a plate

THERE should be a prize for anyone who can comprehend this gift idea, revealed recently in the New York version of *Time Out*: "Jeff Koons limited edition plate. Looking for that special ichotchke? Well, look no further than this Koons multiple. This silvery metal plate is the backdrop for a balloon-animal poodle, sculpted in full relief." Price? \$450.

Thanksgiving Day this week was made more festive by news that wild turkeys had returned to New York for the first time since — some reckon — the War of Independence.

Almost as surprising as their return is their choice of borough. They have picked a park in the Bronx, New York's toughest and arguably least turkey-friendly area. One woman said: "We've got hoodlums and pushers and real head-ass people here. And we now got turkeys. I tell you, the Bronx is one helluva place!"

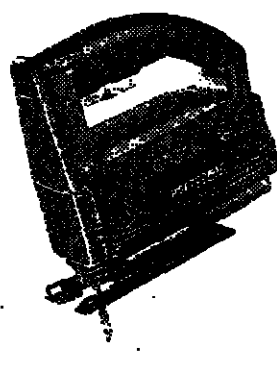
Parents on gang alert

AFTER reports that children as young as six are being recruited by gangs such as *The Bloods*, the city's police this week published *A Parent's Guide to Gang Identification*. Parents are enjoined to check children's arms for burn marks and gang motifs; make sure they wear nothing to school but their uniform; and search bags and bedrooms for weapons. Clearly, it is as hard to be a parent here as it is to be a child.

More powerful offers



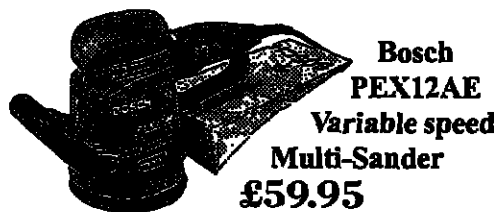
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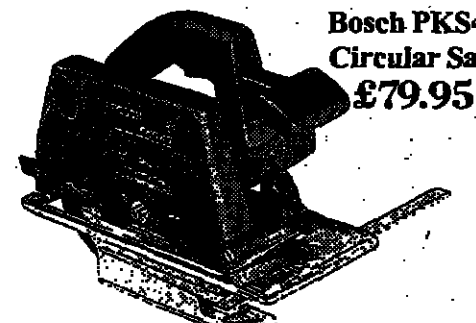
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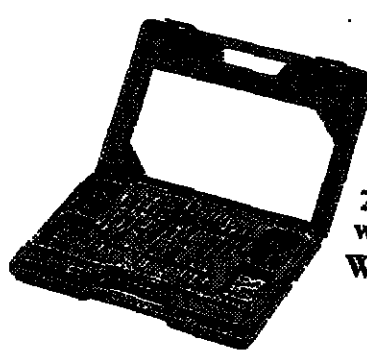


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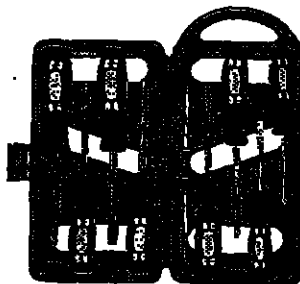


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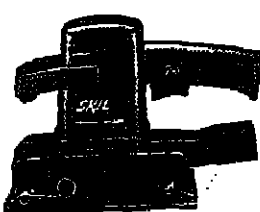
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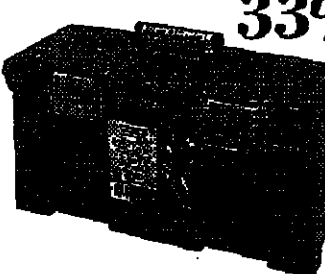
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Inquiry mars mass Moonie blessing

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

THE Rev Sun Myung Moon's plans for thousands of couples to attend a marriage blessing ceremony in Washington today has struck a jarring note.

One of Mr Moon's closest aides bought a full-page advertisement in *The Washington Post* yesterday to decry the newspaper's investigation of Mr Moon's Unification Church and its many business offshoots.

The attack was in contrast to the sweetness and joy that Mr Moon and his aides were hoping to spread with their ceremony, which will be conducted in a football stadium.

Invitations have gone to 35,000 couples to "Blessing '97" to reaffirm their vows. Yesterday the organisers set out chairs on the pitch for about 2,500 couples who will take their wedding vows for the first time.

Mr Moon has conducted other mass weddings and, as before, in many cases he will have matched church members who have never met or barely know each other.

The organisers claimed that 3.6 million couples in more than 50 countries were expected to participate in the marriage rededication ceremony by satellite link. The singer Whitney Houston will reportedly receive more than \$1 million (£600,000) for a 45-minute appearance at the festivities.



Moonie invitations to 35,000 couples

The advertisement in the *Post* accused the newspaper of "tabloid sensationalism at its worst" and of having a "well-deserved reputation for arrogantly disdaining traditional family values and genuine religious beliefs".

It was a bold decision for the *Post* to run the attack on itself, the more so because it was levelled by Dong Moon Joo, who is president of *The Washington Times*. The latter is a much smaller rival of the *Post*, but is owned by the Unification Church. In a series on the "Moonies", the *Post* quoted Mr Moon as saying that he had spent more than \$1 billion in subsidies for the *Washington Times* over 15 years.

In the advert, Mr Dong said that the *Post* had grossly exaggerated the extent of the losses.

Bulgaria in Crisis

Appeal to Times Readers

LEFT TO FREEZE
Jordan, 14, already malnourished could die from cold and hunger this winter unless aid reaches him now. With temperatures plummeting to -15°C Jordan's coat is thinning and he has no shoes. He has little protection from the bitter cold and there is no money to heat his orphanage. There are 37,000 places in Bulgaria's orphanages.



No Money To Feed The Children No Money To Heat The Orphanages

Bulgaria is a country in the midst of a serious economic crisis. Unless urgent help is sent, thousands of children will suffer terribly this winter.

There is little money to heat the orphanages. Orphanage Directors are having to beg for food from local villages and rarely know where the next meal is coming from. In some areas children, like Jordan, are going hungry and the cold could prove fatal for many children this winter. Without aid this could be catastrophic for Bulgaria's orphanage children.

The European Children's Trust, sister charity of The Romanian Orphanage Trust, is ready to distribute emergency food packs, clothes and fuel to the orphanages in most need. Your gift today will save lives and bring hope.

£25 could buy enough emergency food packs to feed 28 orphanage children for a week or heat an orphanage for 3 days.

Please send whatever you can to help children survive the winter or call 01273 299399 NOW

I enclose £ to save Bulgarian orphanage children. Cheques to The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KB8359, 64 Queen Street, LONDON, EC4A 4AR or call 01273 299399 NOW, Registered Charity No. 1048737

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Return to: Tanya Barton, (T), Bulgarian Emergency Appeal, The European Children's Trust, FREEPOST KB8359, 64 Queen Street, LONDON, EC4A 4AR or call 01273 299399 NOW, Registered Charity No. 1048737

Please act NOW - winter is coming

THE SPENCER DIVORCE

The earl ponders his 'big miscalculation'



Fairytale start: Earl and Countess Spencer embrace on their wedding day

THE humiliation Earl Spencer has suffered in a Cape Town court all this week is described by those closest to him as "the greatest miscalculation of his life".

As he spends the weekend in South Africa pondering the wisdom of pursuing this case against his estranged wife, Countess Spencer, he has recognised too late that he has only himself to blame for the embarrassment.

Legal advisers and friends warned him not to wrangle with his wife in court because of the damage it would do to his reputation — so enhanced by his words at the funeral of his sister, Diana, Princess of Wales. His vilification of the tabloid press and barely disguised attack on the attitude of the Royal Family to his sister earned him almost heroic status for the first time in his life.

Never a popular figure in Britain, his pledge in Westminster Abbey to honour his sister's memory by taking a hand in the upbringing of Princes William and Harry was applauded even by the newspapers he regarded as his enemy. Even Tony Blair was asking to consult him. His circle of friends say that,

Legal advisers and friends warned Earl Spencer not to wrangle with his wife in a Cape Town court, but he took no notice of them, Daniel McGrory reports

armed with this new confidence, Lord Spencer decided to bring his four-year separation from his wife to a formal end as quickly as possible.

One said: "It was as if he wanted to start afresh — a new Charles Spencer. But his usual desire to have his own way has got the better of him."

Lawyers who had read Lady Spencer's affidavit told him that in 28 pages she destroys the image of him as a defender of family values and privacy and instead portrays the man she married in 1989 as a drunken, callous womaniser. Typically, Lord Spencer, 33, ignored all the advice and stubbornly refused to increase his £310,000 cash offer to the mother of his four children, which she has dismissed privately as "damned mean".

"Charlie felt he was being bullied and blackmailed into a deal," his friend added. "Remember, this is a man used to getting his own way, particularly up against a woman he

regards as timid. Victoria is so paranoid about publicity and revealing anything about her private life he was sure she would panic on the courtroom steps."

His biggest miscalculation was how strong Victoria has become and how badly she wants her revenge on him for

the infidelities and cruelties. She also thinks he is being mean over the money.

"He was the one who wanted the marriage ended and he was warned going to London might cost him more money, but at least all their dirty linen could not have been reported by the press."

Her lawyers confessed their astonishment that the Spencer legal team had not offered them an improved last-minute financial deal, along with a gagging order on Lady Spencer.

One lawyer said: "He must have known the press that he savaged at Diana's funeral would relish their chance to get him."

Again Lord Spencer had underestimated a foe, telling friends that the tabloid press would be so chastened after the Princess's death that they would ignore his divorce pro-



Lady Spencer, flanked by her legal team, at the Supreme Court in Cape Town

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THE SPENCER DIVORCE



Althorp, left, the Spencer family home in Northamptonshire and, right, Lord Spencer's home in the Cape Town suburb of Constantia

ceedings rather than risk further public condemnation. He also underlined the desire for vengeance of his former mistress, Chantal Collopy, who, unknown to him, had secretly struck up a friendship with Lady Spencer and, worse, had provided damning ammunition for her lawyers.

Realisation of his mistakes dawned on Monday morning as he strolled through the sunshine to the High Court in Cape Town to find his wife and mistress, all smiles, walking into the oak-panelled Court 17 together.

Lord Spencer could only comfort himself with the thought that this hearing was merely to decide whether their divorce should be settled in South Africa, as he wants, or London, where Lady Spencer believes she can expect a settlement nearer the £3.5 million she is demanding.

He was to be proved wrong again. Jeremy Gauntlett, Lady Spencer's impressive barrister, persuaded the judge that Lord Spencer's conduct during the marriage was crucial to the case.

"He knew Victoria had

named three of his affairs, but he was genuinely stunned when the lawyer blurted out that he had up to 12 mistresses. That wasn't in her affidavit. It was the first he heard of it," his friend said.

Lord Spencer gaped open-mouthed at his wife who sat 10ft away on the same wooden bench. She refused to look at him.

"After that first morning, Charles faced a dilemma. His reputation was damaged and he felt the only resort to clear his name and refute what he insists are baseless lies was to have his day in court.

"The gamble is that Victoria's side can, in the meantime, throw so much dirt it sticks, no matter what he says and does now."

His public discomfort has been followed with wry amusement by neighbours in the fashionable Cape Town suburb of Constantia, who have long regarded him as too aloof. He seldom appears at

social events and is criticised locally for refusing endless invitations. He prefers to remain with his present companion, Josie Borain, a model, in what by Constantia standards is a modest home on the Tarrystone House estate, a half-hour drive from the centre of the city.

He is claim that he wants the divorce settled in South Africa because he regards that country as home is similarly scorned by neighbours, who believe it has never been more than a temporary edle to avoid the British press. The view is that Lord Spencer is anxious to agree a financial settlement before returning to Althorp, which by next summer will be among Britain's great tourist attractions.

The case had to be postponed because of his sister's death and there was surprise in the Cape at Lord Spencer's anxiety to expedite the matter.

One legal source said: "We had expected this to stay on the books for an age."

Lady Spencer assumed that her husband would be spending more time in Britain, not only to tend to Althorp and prepare for the summer opening to the public but also, as the "blood relation" of the late Princess, to take a hand in his royal nephews' upbringing.

She had been told by her lawyers to expect the offer of a last-moment settlement. One source said she was reluctant to consider that now "because there is so much blood on the carpet".

After the first day's hearing, on Monday, the shaken Spencer team held a hurried meeting at his lawyers' office to review their tactics.

Lord Spencer was angry that a four-page handwritten letter he sent to Mrs Collopy was read out in court in which he describes himself as "vicious, cruel and a bully".

Continued on page 18, col 3



The Spencers leave St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, with their twin daughters in 1992



Lord Spencer at the Supreme Court in Cape Town

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STEPHANIE & RACHAEL GO TO TOWN IN THEIRS.



The Simmonite sisters have done it again.

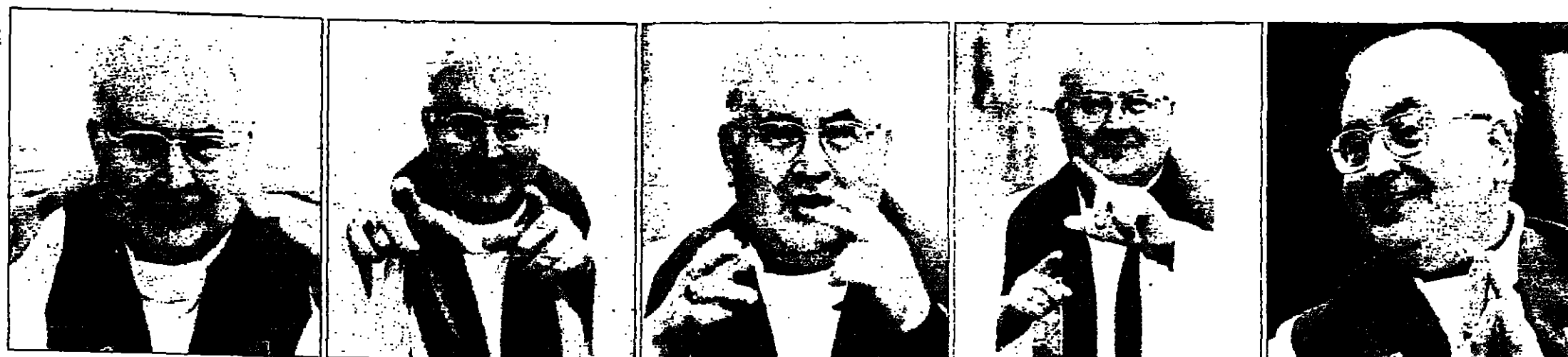
At the end of another gruelling RAC rally, they triumphantly raised the Ladies Trophy. It's an award they're getting more than accustomed to lately, having won the title no less than six times this season.

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ESCORT. WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOURS?





Spiritual warrior: Father Nicolas steers clear of terms such as "possession" and "Devil", preferring to speak of the "unhappiness", "suffering" and "confusion" of those who come to see him

Happy to do battle with forces of evil

Ben Macintyre reports how Father Nicolas helps unhappy souls in Paris

FOR a man who spends most of his waking hours casting out demons, the exorcist of Notre Dame has a devil of a sense of humour.

Father Claude Nicolas, a qualified psychologist, priest, ecclesiastical judge and resident exorcist at the great medieval cathedral in Paris, merrily remembers the time when a polite, middle-aged woman came to him complaining she was hearing satanic voices in her head.

"In the middle of our talk, I asked her whether she was still hearing the voices and what they were saying. She looked embarrassed. 'They just told me that you are a complete idiot,' she replied."

Recalling the incident this week, the portly and rubicund Father Nicolas shook with laughter, resembling more a Gallic version of Friar Tuck than France's most noted expurgator of evil spirits.

Father Nicolas is one of 80 exorcists recognised by the Roman Catholic Church in France. As the millennium approaches, the demand for exorcisms is steadily growing, a product of social, cultural and economic dislocation, he says, and the rise of activity among cults.

"The number of people wanting exorcism is about five times what it was 20 years ago," the priest says in his tiny

chambers beneath the cloister eaves overlooking Notre Dame. About 2,000 people consult an exorcist every year in the Paris region alone. On a single day, Father Nicolas can expect to see up to six people who believe they are possessed, in one way or another, by evil. The priest, who has just published a book, *The Demon of Anguish*, steers clear of terms such as "possession" and "Devil", preferring instead to speak of the "unhappiness", "suffering" and "confusion" of those who come to him needing help.

Notre Dame, thanks to Victor Hugo and his hunchback, may be a byword for Gothic horror, but Father Nicolas laughs off the Hollywood image of exorcism. After hearing an individual's problems, he usually merely places his hands on his or her head and recites a short exorcism prayer. In severe cases, he may refer someone to a mental

health professional. "You do not want to do anything too dramatic," he says, waving his arms and grinning. "That can just make things worse. It is not like *The Exorcist*, you know."

For some reason it is faintly disquieting to discover that the exorcist of Notre Dame has seen the 1973 film, but that is only one of the unexpected contrasts in a man at once a priest and a psychologist, both worldly and believing, jovial and deadly earnest. He recalls with deep scepticism the most dramatic case he witnessed. "She was about 40 years old and she had the lot: scratches were appearing on her arms; she was having visions, screaming. I think she was a 100 per cent hysteric."

On the other hand, Father Nicolas believes what he sees. He recounts, for example, the occasion when a young woman came to his rooms claiming to be bewitched. Immediately, all the light bulbs exploded. The woman apologised profusely, insisting there was a curse on her. "I tried to reassure her: 'Look, the light on the radiator is still working'. No sooner had I said the words than that light bulb popped too, and off went the radiator."

The people who come to Notre Dame seeking exorcism are from all social groups, he



Father Claude Nicolas at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, where he conducts many of his exorcisms

says. About a third are African: many are middle-class French professionals, more men than women, the largest age-group 30 to 40, some highly educated and all suffering deep spiritual anxiety.

"They are very varied. I cannot say that someone is 10 per cent genuinely possessed, 5 per cent hysterical, 15 per cent the product of their social or cultural milieu and so on. There is always a mixture. It is not for me to decide."

The key measure, he says, is that after consulting him and being exorcised, many people are reassured and grateful. He writes in his book: "They have lost their confidence. That

anguish must be 'exorcised' in order to see clearly, with the vision of Christ, who is the victor over all evil. There are so many charlatans out there, false exorcists looking for money, exploiting misery. This book is an attempt to expose them."

Ask Father Nicolas whether he has directly encountered the Devil himself and he grows suddenly quiet and serious, replying with another story: "A young Congolese man, who had a doctorate from the Sorbonne, came to me in deep distress, saying he had joined two cults and needed confession and exorcism. The moment I put my

hand on his forehead he gave a cry and fell unconscious. When he came to, he was beaming, radiant and went away happy."

Father Nicolas pauses. "Was that the Devil? Was that a profound religious experience linked to his culture? I don't know. But in any case, he is a believer. He asked for

liberation, which worked. That is enough." Father Nicolas predicts that demand for his expertise will rise sharply in the next few years, given the increasing spiritual confusion at the *fin de siècle*, deepening social problems in France and a greater willingness by people to address their own unhappiness.

Highest homes in roof of the world

By Ben Macintyre

A JOINT Franco-British exploration team has discovered what are believed to be the world's highest human homes, beehive-shaped huts in the barren "empty quarter" of Tibet.

The ancient houses, built out of adobe mud bricks on the Changhang plain at an average altitude of 16,000ft, had been overlooked by the tiny handful of Europeans to have visited the region, according to Michel Peissel, who recently travelled to the area with fellow explorer Sebastian Guinness, of the Guinness family.

They came across the mud houses during a 2,000-mile journey along the region's ancient salt routes.

Dr Peissel said that the buildings were built as winter shelters by Tibet's northernmost nomads, the Sumpa and Senggo tribes, and had been missed by earlier adventurers who spoke no Tibetan or mistook them for Buddhist monuments.

The structures show Persian influences from prehistoric times and may be remnants of the ancient pre-Buddhist kingdom of Shang Shung, which scholars have been seeking for more than a century. The northern plains of Tibet are the highest and one of the coldest regions in the world, and the buildings have been built so as to retain maximum warmth from a fire fuelled by yak or sheep dung. Their vaulted ceilings are unknown in the rest of Tibet. In the summer the nomads live in yak-hair tents.

Dr Peissel presented his discovery to the International Symposium on Tibetan Architecture in Paris yesterday. He said the buildings might indicate that the earliest settlers of Tibet came from the West and not from the East as previously supposed.

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PC PCs order of the day in Germany

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

FLAT-CHESTED Hispanic-looking car thieves have been given a breathing space by a new ruling in Germany's political-correctness revolution which obliges police officers to avoid all sexually-suggestive and ethnic adjectives in crime reports.

They will no longer be able to describe suspects as "full-bosomed" or "flat-chested", the term "negroid" is to be replaced by "African", and the word "Mediterranean" as a description of a swarthy type is to be dropped. Nobody can be described as having "Slavic" looks, and references to some regional accents are now regarded as off-limits.

The overhaul of the police vocabulary is in response to complaints by a church group, which said police reports "were using concepts that evoked Nazi racial ideology". Since individual police officers have been accused in the past of racism and sexism, Germany's regional interior ministers yesterday decided that it was time to clean up police language.

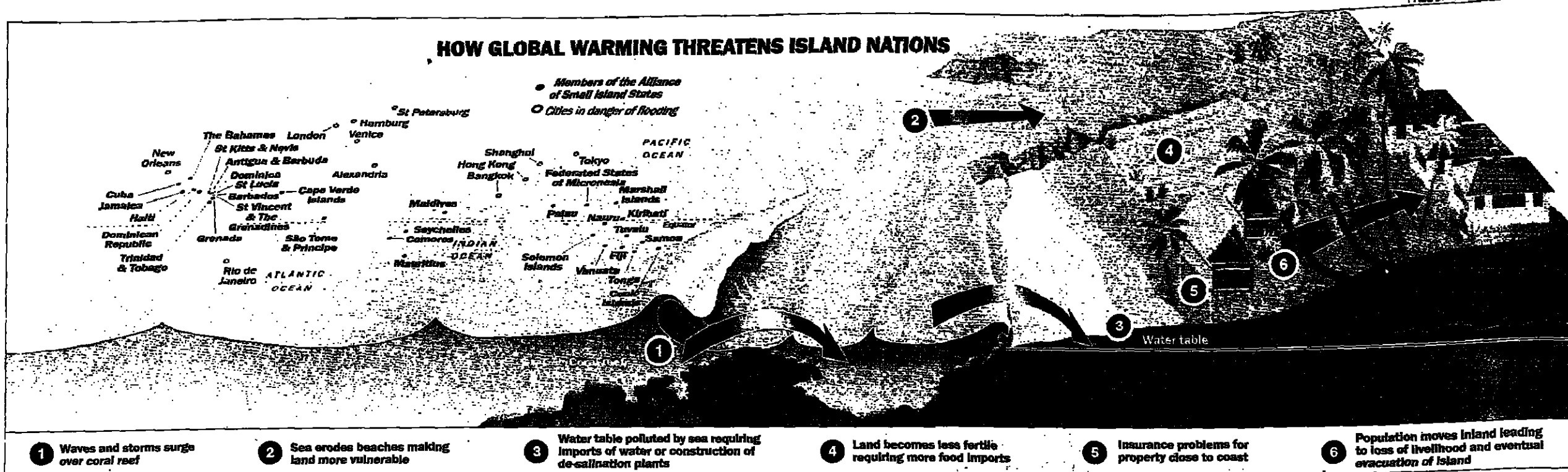
Bavaria, the region with the best crime-detection figures in Germany, is refusing to take part in the linguistic purge. Liberal police officers say the impact on detection rates since busts can be altered by plastic surgery. Moreover, an adjective such as "negroid" was not only racist, but also very vague. Even so, some police sources believe that detection may be slowed down: 18 of the 1,500 female suspects on the Stuttgart police computer, for example, are currently described as "full-bosomed".

Political correctness has been rapidly changing the German language, and, above all, influencing television and politics. It has, as in other countries, changed traditional job descriptions and product names. For example, a cream-filled chocolate that used to be known in Germany as a "Negro's Kiss" is now a "Chocolate-Cream Kiss".

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Bulgaria in Crisis



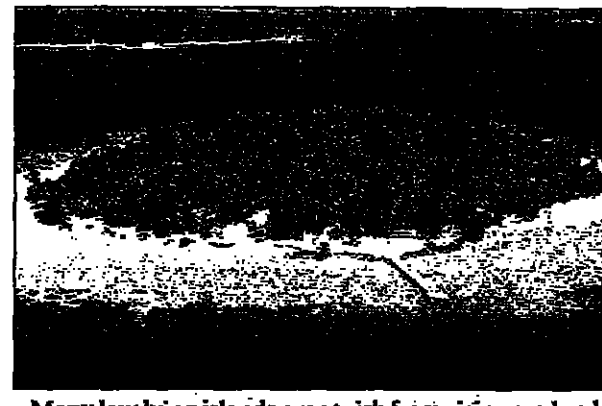
Islanders ready for Pacific evacuation

AN EVACUATION plan is being drawn up by a group of Pacific islanders after research showing that global warming and rising sea levels will make them uninhabitable. The Marshall Islands are believed to be the first of a string of low-lying Pacific and Caribbean states to consider such drastic action. But the islands — named by William Marshall, a 18th-century British naval captain, sailing by on the *Scarborough* in 1788 with convicts en route to New South Wales — are unlikely to be the last. Scientists predict that many small island states may be totally or partially swamped by rising sea levels and increased storm activity. News of the evacuation plans comes on the eve of the climate conference starting in Kyoto, Japan, next week. Espen Ronneberg, a mem-

ber of the Marshall Islands mission to the United Nations, said: "The research has identified migration or evacuation as a worst-case scenario but one which, in the light of the scientific evidence on climate change, we should pursue." The islands, which rely on fishing, tourism and coconuts, are vulnerable because they are on average just 6ft above sea level with the highest point being Likiep atoll at almost 20ft high. Studies indicate that some time in the next century 80 per cent of the main island and capital will be under the waves. A string of options are being studied, including the purchase of a high-lying island elsewhere, able to accommodate the Government and the Marshalls' 56,000 citizens. The islands also have a special treaty with the United States which means that some

of the refugees from environmental change might find a haven there. "But whether the agreement will be honoured when our country disappears under the waves is anybody's guess," said Mr Ronneberg. The Marshall Islands, 29 atolls and 1,225 islets scattered over three quarters of a million square miles of ocean, is one of some 20 "frontline states" whose very existence is threatened by the build-up of pollution, such as carbon dioxide, in the atmosphere. Others include the Maldives, the Cook Islands, Nauru, Kiribati (the former Gilbert Islands), the Seychelles, Antigua and Barbuda and the Federated States of Micronesia. They have banded together into the Association of Small Island States (Aosis) to lobby the industrialised nations to back a 20 per

Global warming threatens to swamp a string of atolls and create a refugee crisis, writes Nick Nuttall



Many low-lying islands are at risk from rising sea levels

cent cut in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Mr Ronneberg said: "We think this is a modest figure given the threats we face. The scientists tell us we need a 60 per cent cut just to stabilise carbon dioxide emissions. But we realise this cannot be achieved overnight." Dr Iftihar Ayaz, the British-based honorary consul for Tuvalu, formerly the Ellis Islands, said that curbing emissions to save such nations was a crucial human rights issue. "These people have a right to their land. It would also be a loss to the world of a culture and a language. We are doing so much to save animals and plants from extinction. How can we tolerate the extinction of a nation?" Dr Ayaz said Tuvalu's 10,000 islanders could be relocated to Australia or New Zealand. "Their lives would be saved but the culture would die. The world would be the poorer," he said. Many of these far-flung,

vulnerable, nations are also important staging and resting posts for migrating birds, as well as being home to unique wildlife unlikely to survive elsewhere. A spokesman for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds cited the Cape Verde Islands, home to the Raso lark, and the Seychelles, home to the Seychelles magpie-robin. "These birds will vanish from the wild if these islands disappear or there is a significant loss of land," he said. The island nations facing the most uncertain future are like the Marshalls, the coral atolls. Neroni Slade, the Samoan Ambassador to the UN and chairman of Aosis, said that many small islands were already experiencing greater storm and wave damage. Property insurance was becoming increasingly hard to obtain or was being offered at prohibitively high costs. "The insurance industry has suffered enormous losses over recent years. They are with-

drawing from many islands or many ordinary citizens can no longer afford the high rates," he said. Scientists advising the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, estimate that sea levels will rise by half a metre during the next century as global temperatures rise. Dr Tom Spencer, of the Coastal Research Unit at Cambridge University, said the critical question, was whether the reefs that protect these islands from storms and waves would grow fast enough to keep up with rising sea levels. Some researchers fear rising temperatures will cause bleaching which kills the organisms that feed a reef's growth. "There is also human impact. Reefs from Asia to Indonesia are under enormous pressure from huge, growing, urban populations. Pollution and destruction mean maybe the corals will become less resilient," Dr Spencer said. The ability of the reefs to

defend these islands will also depend on the extent to which other climatic events become more frequent and violent. El Niño, a transfer of warm water across the Pacific which can trigger droughts and monsoons, can — like global warming — raise sea levels by 18-20 inches. Dr John Bythell, an expert on coral atolls at the University of Newcastle's Marine Sciences and Coastal Management Centre, said many of these islands would become intolerable well before the last acre disappeared beneath the waves. Studies indicate that, once a reef fails to defend an atoll, the island spirals into decline. Beaches, also vital for defending the land and property and important for tourism, will be washed away. Soils, vital for buildings and crops, then become more rapidly eroded.

Coral reefs need clear water to replenish themselves. The mud and debris washed off the land would make seas murky, making it impossible for sunlight to filter through. "Nutrients, released from the land, favour other marine organisms above coral like macro-algae or fleshy seaweeds. They will then grow up and smother the reef," said Dr Bythell. Fragile freshwater supplies, built up by rainfall and floating on top of saltwater in the centre of the islands, are likely to become contaminated by seawater. The fertile land for growing crops such as coconuts will also become increasingly salty and worthless. Eventually, more land will be lost to erosion and flooding and the economy of these states will collapse.

Leading article, page 23

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Climate conference has stormy outlook

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

THE conference on climate change in the Japanese city of Kyoto next month, promises to be one of the most politically charged environmental meetings for many years. Negotiations will focus on a legally binding commitment by rich countries to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other global warming gases such as methane. Few nations, with the possible exception of some members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries, appear to doubt scientific claims that rising pollution, mainly from burning fossil fuels, is threatening the planet. However, there remain deep divisions within the key countries, including the United States, over the scale of the likely impacts, the cost of taking action and the speed required to head off the threat. The road to Kyoto began in Rio de Janeiro five years ago when the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change obliged industrialised nations to stabilise emissions of carbon dioxide at 1990 levels by 2000. But only a few countries, including Britain, will meet these voluntary targets. In 1995 the Berlin Mandate set a deadline for the Kyoto meeting where binding targets would become subject to international law. The offers on the table are numerous and many have caveats. New Zealand wants its forests, which soak up carbon gases, to be included in its cutback plan. The United States wants forest planting and other "mitigation" schemes it implements in the Third World to count against its domestically generated pollution. The European Union has set a target of a 15 per cent cut by 2010, while Britain has said that, whatever is agreed, it will voluntarily cut emissions by 20 per cent by 2010. Canada and America, the world's biggest emitter, have said they will only stabilise by 2010 rather than cut. America's other contentious proposal is that developing countries, including China and India, should sign up now to future cuts. Australia, another big emitter and producer of fossil fuels, wants its emissions to rise by 18 per cent. Japan is proposing cuts of between 3.2 and 5 per cent. On the other side are the G77 group of developing nations, and China, which are calling for cuts by rich countries of 35 per cent by 2020. They also want a compensation package to help them to clean up power station emissions. Where agreement will be found is anybody's guess.

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The truth behind the beastly tales

Simon Barnes on the animals that stalk the mind's wilderness

Once again the Beast of Bodmin raises its comely head. Or maybe it doesn't. Still, this week has brought us yet another photograph of the legendary cat, and a jolly beast-like snap it is, too. But it matters little whether our modern-day Grimalkin is, or is not, lurking in the West Country wilds. It soft-foots its way unchallenged across the minds of the English people.

Unlike the Africans, who inhabit a darker continent, who see lions and elephant and hippopotami aplenty, we are a bit short of real monsters. That is why we are so captivated by beastly tales. Imaginary animals lurk in the darker wildernesses of our minds.

There is a whole science — I use the term loosely — dedicated to them. These are beasts that a Roman Catholic priest — who always comes into it for some reason — swears he has seen. But for us more ordinary mortals, they seem always to exist just a fraction beyond the focus of the longest lens. They live and breathe and have their being just a tantalising inch away from outright proof. Study of these animals is called cryptozoology.

The Loch Ness Monster. Bigfoot. The Abominable Snowman: these are always considered to be leviathans that time forgot. The Loch Ness Monster is (or is not) a plesiosaur that survived the great cretaceous extinction; the others are great apes, missing links that somehow leapt clear when the grim reaper of extinction swung his scythe.

Other cryptic monsters have a more prosaic background. My early journalistic days, tedious enough in all conscience, on the *Surrey Mirror* were occasionally enlivened by tales of the Surrey Puma. A pet rabbit had only to be nibbled by a fox or a dog and the whole story could be gleefully resurrected again.

Does the puma still stalk around Reigate and Redhill? If so, it is certainly most venerable by now. But perhaps it has sired a dynasty of pumas, living their secret lives, ever just a torchbeam-length away from a clear sighting.

There is always a feasible explanation for such mysteries: usually an escape from a zoo or the menagerie of some eccentric collector. Or perhaps they are animals deliberately released by unscrupulous libertarians — the guerrilla wing of the RSPCA, perhaps.

The Beast of Bodmin is now revealed in a fairly convincing photograph as, at the very least, an awfully large pussycat — probably a puma. There are apparently (or allegedly) a pair. Footprints have been found in china clay pits that give "every indication" of a puma and a cub. The critics are breeding out there! Cue *Jurassic Park* music.

Well, maybe they are. We certainly want to believe it. At least the souvenir touts do. A home-grown monster is great for trade in T-shirts and mugs and dishcloths and pens. But our desire to believe goes far further than that.

Belief in something monstrous out there, something big and hairy and razor-fanged, goes deep into our human race-memories — into atavistic instincts kept alive in fairy tale. The story of Little Red Riding Hood may seem a merry tale, but once it was a nightmare. Not so very many millennia ago, the forests really were dangerous. Little boys really did cry wolf. Little girls really might meet families of bears. People got killed out there.

Now, in the area around Bodmin Moor, reactions range from incredulity through rather edgy facetiousness to complete and touching faith. This sort of wild beast comes to us in the form of fiction, imagination, folk-tale and maybe the occasional episode. And we respond to them as a strange, ungovernable form of nostalgia: an involuntary memory of times we never knew, times when the balance of power of life on earth was utterly different.

Once people lived in a state of siege, in islands of civilisation surrounded by oceans of wilderness. And in the wilderness were beasts that could bite. Now our wilderness survives only in islands: besieged patches of green threatened by lapping oceans of civilisation.

Our ancestors had a natural fear of wilderness and a natural fear of the natural world. We are still in the grip of this fear. Perhaps that is why the pace of destruction of the natural world continues unabated: our technology is 21st century, but part of our minds is always running 5,000 years off the pace.

Cryptozoology is an instructive subject, but mainly for what it tells us about the human mind: always half in love with, half in deadly fear of the wild. But, as a matter of fact, I can tell you about creatures ten times as weird as the Loch Ness Monster and the Beast of Bodmin simply by stretching out a hand to my bookshelves.

I am compiling a bestiary, you see: a bestiary of endangered animals. Real ones: beasts whose current existence is not in doubt, although their future existence is. These include such delights as the Kerry slug, the St Helena giant earwig, the pygmy hog-sucking louse and the Iowa Pleistocene snail.

These are all genuine creatures but all genuinely threatened with extinction. Moral: the natural world is not, after all, weirder than we imagine. It is weirder than we can imagine.

NATURE NOTES



Fig 1 Cultured turnip

U-Turnips (Manifesto wasinjesto)

These vegetables do not live up to their spring promise. They can make a perfect hash, leaving a nasty taste, but still remain surprisingly popular.

Pulp fact for the prurient

Though Earl Spencer is a private citizen, his infelicities inflame public interest. We deal rough justice, but there is no escape

The marital affairs of Earl Spencer, currently before a court in South Africa, are of no conceivable public interest to Britain. The custodian of the Spencer millions is not running for public office and holds no professional trust. He receives no public funds. The state of his marriage, the extent of his wealth, the glamour of his women, the quantity (or quality) of his infidelities in no way impinge on public policy.

No law is at issue in his case, no wider principle in need of public debate. Divorce court proceedings are conducted in public only on the archaic and often bogus grounds that marriage breakdown is a communal, not a private affair. But even a divorce should not involve the sacrifice of every right to privacy.

Earl Spencer is a private citizen who has emphatically refused to consent to intrusion on his affairs. Other than what is said in a courtroom, he is entitled to the protection of the code of practice laid down by the Press Complaints Commission. No "public interest" defence applies.

I must, of course, be joking. "No public interest?" cries the public with one voice. What about the massive interest of the public? Go on, give us another tale of the love life of the sexy earl. Read out another salacious detail about the untempered model. Here is a real-life nobleman, brother of the saintly Diana, ensnared by an entire regiment of alimony-seekers and shopping harriers. All they wanted was to nab a title and grab some cash — "just a little, tiny cheque" said one bride and groom — and then he treats them badly. The man is clearly a cad. The world loves to see such men brought low. No public interest? Pull the other one.

I had better start again. Readers of this newspaper will have noted a story filling most of page five of Wednesday's issue. The headline was "Holiday alone for lawyer who fled bride and groom". A Londoner named Tassos Michael had met Nicole Contos, the daughter of a New York banana tycoon, on a Mediterranean beach. Love blossomed and a marriage was arranged. Just before the ceremony the groom panicked and fled alone to the Tahitian hotel which he had intended for their honeymoon.

The mortified Miss Contos was not to be outshined. She invited the wedding guests to a slap-up recep-

tion, an event that did little to enhance the good name of London lawyer/fiancée. Neither Miss Contos nor Mr Michael were going to sacrifice spending commitments merely for want of a wedding. She has duly become Saint Joan of the chat shows in America's gender war. He is collecting his thoughts in Tahiti and trying to avoid the press. If there is one thing the world cannot tolerate, it is a cancelled wedding.

These are all private people. Neither Earl Spencer nor Mr Michael sought publicity for their private lives, indeed both struggled to avoid it. Earl Spencer "put himself forward" on the issue of privacy in his funeral oration on Diana.

I disagreed with what he said. But nothing there jeopardised his ostensible rights under Britain's privacy regulation. True, he also professed himself as protector of the heir to the throne. According to his wife's publicists, his domestic arrangements hardly make him ideal to fill that role. All in all, he may be an odd fish, unappealing except to a narrow class of entrepreneurial females. But lack of charm should not expunge his right to natural justice.

The breakdown in their personal relationships has meant both Earl Spencer and Mr Michael being subjected to public obloquy, punished beyond all sense of proportion. Given the publicity they have experienced, I doubt if any woman has an ounce of sympathy for either of them.

The only place for such men is in the wrong. No ruinous, no bankrupt, no slur on their good name is too much. Mr Michael should have gone to the altar. Earl Spencer should have paid up like a man. Any punishment fits the crime, with a willing media acting as judge, jury and executioner. Husbands, wives, children, all are swept up and delivered to the gallows, to a gallery of cheering women.

What business is this of ours? All broken marriages are tragic, but the shades of guilt are peculiarly unsuited to a court of law, let alone to the cruder jury of the press. If the courts must be involved, I do not see what public interest is served by them sitting in open session, certainly no interest that outweighs the harm to the parties and their children. If "reporting restrictions" can apply in cases of child crime and rape, why not in matrimonial litigation, especially where children are involved? Were these men victims of physical injury from a mob, the law would offer them protection. To be the victim of mob ridicule under court privilege leaves them defenceless.

Yet to assert a right to privacy is not the same as formulating its enforcement. Court procedure aside, nobody has found a way of doing this. Especially for those already famous, the right to privacy is too hard to define. In Earl Spencer's case, many would still consider him fair game given the terms of his funeral oration. It is one thing to assert that people must be allowed to take a stance on privacy without thereby sacrificing any right to themselves. It is another to imagine a court convicting a newspaper presenting a "public interest" defence, when the plaintiff is rich, well-known, spoke at Diana's funeral and leads what many would consider to be a less than blameless private life. It is even harder to define the rights of a husband in such a case, when the wife chooses to breach his privacy as a tactical weapon both in and out of court.

As Earl Spencer has been forced to admit, even South Africa's stringent privacy laws are no defence against the media equivalent of a tornado. Like all privacy laws, South Africa's are fine when dormant and useless when put to the test. The Spencer story is simply too big for the law to handle. All restraint, whether by law

or self-regulation, is swept aside by voracious reader appetite. The "public interest" defence for intrusion is hopelessly ambiguous. It is a shoe that can be stretched to fit any foot.

The private infelicity of others is of utter public fascination. All other excuses for intrusion are humbug. Pulp fiction will appease this fascination, but when pulp fact is on offer, there is joy in Heaven and Fleet Street.

England has no word for *Schadenfreude*, but it certainly has a yen for it. How delicious it is to see the pain of others. Affairs of the heart turned sour are worth a dozen sleaze rows or Euro-debates or fox-hunting bans. Here are human anguish, courage, viciousness and love paraded before us, and in real time. A high-profile divorce is prize fighting for romantics. Damn the press for its intrusiveness, cries the public, as it pours into the shop to buy every scrap of intrusive news.

Joseph Conrad wrote that no man has come of age until life has visited him with a monstrous practical joke. The flippancy was aimed at a darker truth. There is something of Lord Jim in both Mr Michael and Earl Spencer. Mr Michael vanished to distant parts after having an onrush of wisdom, for which no one will give him credit. Lord Spencer vanished despite being born to perk and privilege, apparently to start a new life. Both are victims of a fame they never sought. Yet such people can draw down only so much sympathy.

They are best seen as victims of accident, caught at random in the roving spotlight of celebrity. They then become mirrors which we hold up to our faces, either to understand ourselves better or, at worst, to make ourselves feel good. Alexander Pope understood the paradox of self-righteousness amid disaster. His tarnished humanity was "Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurled". The glory, jest, and riddle of the world. Marriage is a microcosm of such equivocal glory. The proper study of mankind is married man.

Each week offers fresh material for this study. The justice is rough on persons known or unknown. But there is no escape. If fame is an accident, it must be treated as a joke in bad taste. We must laugh in its face. If Earl Spencer cannot take a joke, he should not have married the woman in question.

Philip Howard



Fond farewell to a hero and a pedant

The couple marching westward down Piccadilly were impeccably turned out. He in Homburg and subfusc overcoat with furred umbrella hooked over his arm. She in black fur hat with diamond regimental badge of the Mutton Lancers. I fell in beside them and said: "You must be marching for Shan Hackett. Mind if I join you?" The eminent general peered through the gloom at my Black Watch tie and asked: "Were you in his regiment?" But I was one of Hackett's friends from the peacably turned out world of hackery.

Sir John Hackett's memorial service was one of the last for what in *Forty Years On* Alan Bennett called "The Breed", and whom mischievous obituarists describe as "the Moustaches": genuine heroes. But Shan was a rarer breed than that. He was a scholar-general. Soldier poets are common, as seen in this week's film *Regeneration*. But those are other ranks or junior officers.

Scholar-generals come once a century and are regarded with suspicion by Whitehall. Archie Wavell was removed from North Africa by Churchill, but as Viceroy he laid the foundations for independence for which Mountbatten claimed the credit. Philip Sidney was cut off at Zutphen, having discarded leg armour when he found that a comrade-in-arms had neglected to wear any. Julius Caesar is remembered more for his commentaries than his conquests.

So Shan's service was an unusual mixture. It was both pukka and intellectual. There were more field marshals than one would dare to shake a swagger stick at, and brigadiers in rancorous suits acted as ushers. But the words were read by eminent professors in smoking-room suits and the choir came from King's College London in student jeans.

I met Shan when he wrote to me about solocisms in *The Times*. I wrote back unusually briskly on the subject of "gay" as an adjective or noun applied to a homosexual, pointing out that the word had shady sexual roots from its origins. And I rounded off, impudently, telling him that he ran some risk of becoming a linguistic curmudgeon.

From that letter we became friends. For Shan was that white unicorn of language, a broad-minded pedant. He was also no mean classicist. His presidential address to the Classical Association, treating the *Iliad* as if it were a modern campaign, was a *tour de force*. He witnessed the origin of the slang "to swan around". For he was open to the young and their language, which was why there was no student rebellion at King's 30 years ago. And after we had saluted the last scholar-general, the old and the bold, the gowns and the towns marched to the Cavalry and Guards Club to toast him in flowing champagne. And if ever tempted to be unduly permissive or less than precise about language, I shall remember my dear liberal pedant and simplify.

Own goal

A LABOUR MP looks set to take a new job that would put him under pressure to resign from the House of Commons. Tom Pendry is expected to be appointed as head of the Football Trust, for which he would be paid partly out of public funds. Under parliamentary rules, ministers are the only MPs allowed to be remunerated from the public purse. Tony Blair has pushed Pendry for the job after passing him over for Sports Minister in favour of Tony Banks. Pendry, who remains bitter at his failure to gain the portfolio last May after having been sports spokesman, will be able to establish his own power base to compete with Banks. The Football Trust is to be given £5 million from the lottery — which Tories will insist is public money. The chairman, Lord Aberdeen, a former Tory minister, is stepping down. Richard Faulkner, his deputy, was to be offered the job by trustees.

But Whitehall has intervened to push for Pendry. The appointment is now awaiting the endorsement of Banks, who prefers Faulkner. But I gather that he has been overruled by Blair. The job was to be unpaid, but Pendry apparently had assumed he would receive a salary. Should he get one, it raises ques-



Tony Banks: Tom Pendry

tions about whether he could be deemed to be holding an "office of profit under the Crown". "I have had no formal offer," ventures the bejewelled Pendry. "I understand that the job is a paid position."

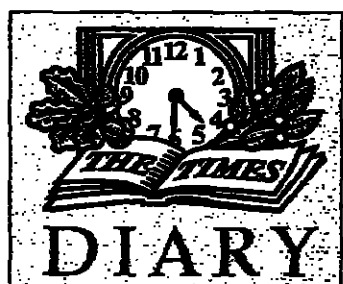


● OASIS are to be invited to perform at the Millennium Dome. Tony Blair's favourite rockers are being wooed by Peter Mandelson, a friend of Alan McGee, the Gallagher brothers' record company boss. This could solve a crisis, as little has been organised by way of nocturnal entertainment. I have just one question: by 2000, will Oasis be starring as buskers at the new Greenwich Underground?

Prickly visitor

THE Queen has just eaten the first pineapple to be grown here since the 18th century. The Smooth Cayenne was presented at Buckingham Palace on Thursday night from the Lost Gardens of Heligan — a revivalist patch down in Cornwall. Her Majesty ate the fruit instead of pudding that night. It was delivered in a taxi by Tim Smit, chief pineapple-tender. "We found the shrub in South Africa and grew it in 100 tons of hot manure in our 18th-century pineapple pits," he says proudly. "Prince Charles visited in June and suggested that his mother might like one." So how

● OLD TIMES "It is not miners who should face the sack, but ministers who betrayed them." Robin Cook in 1993, on Michael Heseltine's energy policy. This week, Labour backbenchers accused the Government of failing to protect 5,000 threatened jobs in the industry.



JASPER GERARD

come Hanoverian sorts could grow them? "They used to keep boys up all night to swish pineapples around in steaming manure." Delicious, I am sure.

● AFTER Lord Irvine of Lairg's department shelled out a reported £60,000 for wallpaper, the Lord



The Queen: pineapple meal

Chancellor has turned to City headhunters Price Waterhouse to find a new Permanent Secretary. Facing competition for the £125,000-a-year post has done little to win him the job. The year award from civil servants particularly as the need for legal qualifications is to be waived.

Seedy plans

THE SPIRIT of Nazism will forever pervade the Reichstag — thanks, partly, to Sir Norman Foster. The British architect, giving the building an MoT so it can house the new German parliament, is studying the papers of the architect Adolf Speer, a particular favourite of Adolf Hitler. Speer conducted extensive geotechnical surveys for foundations on which to build halls of the people, victory arches, grand avenues, stuff to please Adolf. Now Foster is cribbing his notes. "Speer discussed with a German engineer how to make parliament as energy-efficient as possible," I am told. Among the ideas being chewed over? Powering the Reichstag by rapeseed oil.

● NEW TIMES CHRISTMAS spirit. Shoppers passing the windows of the Debenhams & Jones department store in London will be treated to the compelling sight of female models in evening dress — each holding a good-will Kalashnikov rifle encrusted with tiny glittering mirrors.



Magazine publisher Fortier: Labour MP Marshall-Andrews

PARTY TIME HAVING chewed over the quality of parliamentary debate at the *Spectator* awards at the Savoy last week, lunchtime conversation turned, naturally, to bras. Ken Livingstone raised the matter with Kimberly Fortier, the magazine's publisher. And she suggests that the Left's champion recommended the Queen's brassiere manufacturer (Rigby & Peller, apparently). The MP offers a different slant. "I would only recommend M&S, definitely," he ventures. Top table conversation was more reflective. Lord Callaghan



Bra debate: Ken Livingstone



of Cardiff said: "Sitting on the terrace of the Commons on an afternoon last summer with the PM, he said that he had never met Harold Wilson. I was even more shocked when the Conservatives elected a leader younger than my grandson." Later I stumbled across the marvellous Bob Marshall-Andrews, raffish QC and Labour MP, slurping from a silver salver. He suggested an excellent dictum for political survival. "If you manage to keep your head while all around are losing theirs, then you have seriously failed to grasp the gravity of the situation."



GREEN PIQUE

The EU should get off its high horse at the climate conference

Five years ago at the Rio de Janeiro "Earth summit", governments agreed that, for all the multiple disagreements about its extent and nature, global warming was a sufficiently serious planetary risk to warrant an international convention to limit climate change. All countries agreed to report on their emissions of the "greenhouse gases", notably carbon dioxide, which trap heat in the atmosphere; and the industrialised countries, which account for 70 per cent of emissions, also agreed on a voluntary basis to make a start on cutting their CO₂ emissions. No country was willing to commit itself to legally binding targets.

The international debate since then has become decidedly heated — not least because Rio divided the world into the "Annex 1" industrialised countries which were to cut emissions and the rest, which successfully argued that to do so would unfairly inhibit their economic growth. Climate change has thus become hostage to all the destructive habits of north-south diplomacy. But the diplomats have inched forward. Two years ago in Berlin, the Annex 1 countries agreed to legally binding limits on future emissions, although they deferred a decision to 1997.

That deadline has now arrived; but the 169 governments which descend on Kyoto this Monday are bitterly divided about what target to set, by when, and even about who should sign up to it. The European Union has taken a maximalist position which would reduce the industrialised world's emissions to 85 per cent of 1990 levels by 2010. America, pointing out that most EU countries will not even meet the Rio goal of stabilising CO₂ emissions at 1990 levels by 2000, says that this is simply not credible. The EU is derivative of America's own offer, which goes no further than stabilising at 1990 levels by around 2012. America further insists that there will be no deal if the developing countries continue to be given a "free ride". Deadlock is possible.

The EU should get off its high horse, fast. What matters at Kyoto is not so much the precise target that is set — this can always be toughened in future negotiations — but the legal precedent. There are serious argu-

ments about how much needs to be done, how soon, and even the US target would represent a cut of 30 per cent on what its emissions would otherwise be by 2012. A modest target is better than none at all. Equally, America should accept that the West has a responsibility to set the pace.

The one thing that would represent an unacceptable risk is delay. This is because emissions in the developing countries are rising fast; they have gone up in the past five years by between 25 per cent and 50 per cent in India, China, Indonesia and South Korea. The Americans have a point. But there is no prospect of the wider bargain that is needed if the West, as today's principal polluter, cannot agree now to legal limits.

Beyond Kyoto, governments should think hard about methods, not just targets. Many of the actions required if CO₂ output is to be reduced make good economic as well as environmental sense. It would benefit Germany to cut its coal subsidies, Britain to insulate its houses better and America to promote fuel-efficient cars. But others will be very expensive.

So the next step is to look at trade-offs of two kinds. The first should be to help developing countries with technology that would help fuel-efficient growth. The second could, as America has urged, be to develop a trade in emissions "permits". The idea would be for countries where emissions can be cut more cheaply to sell emission rights to others where they would cost more. Since climate knows no boundaries, what matters is overall transmissions, and this could cut costs of CO₂ reductions in the developed world by up to 40 per cent. Poorer countries would make gains, in return, in technology and efficiency. Last month, the US signed what could be a model deal of this kind with Argentina. Britain, Germany and the US have begun drafting trading rules and a few key future polluters, such as India, have expressed cautious interest. But this is delicate bargaining territory. Deadlock at Kyoto would end the prospects of such trade-offs. The EU goes to Kyoto clothed in righteousness. It is more important to return with a deal than with a glow of virtue unrequited.

FALSE TRAIL

The Government's options after the anti-hunting vote

After the relative calm of Bosnia, Tony Blair has to consider his options in the harsher light of the House of Commons vote on hunting. Michael Foster's Wild Mammals (Hunting with Dogs) Bill received a massive 260-vote majority. As matters stand, this legislation will probably not make further progress during this session of Parliament. That is not, though, certain. Mr Blair has been presented with a dilemma, a potential opportunity and a possible danger.

There will be the temptation for the Prime Minister to acknowledge the "will of the people". The anti-hunting cause could be co-opted and introduced as an amendment to a Criminal Justice Bill. This might have many tactical advantages. The Government would receive direct credit for the abolition measure. It would offer radicalism of a sort but without unfortunate public expenditure consequences. A substantial section of the electorate would be impressed. Furthermore, this might appease dozens of increasingly restless Labour backbench members.

Yet, the most significant incentive would be of an entirely different nature. Those who want to move swiftly against the House of Lords have sensed this is also their moment. The hereditary peers could be drawn into a showdown on this issue. Nothing would undermine the case for retaining their lordships in their current form more than a reactionary struggle on behalf of an unloved minority. The ermine and the fox might both be dealt with in one sitting. This would prompt further plaudits still from the same potential rebels who could otherwise oppose Mr Blair on social security questions.

There is also, however, the danger of trying to be too clever. There are substantial

risks in this approach that should not be underestimated. Mr Blair's cherished reputation as a "fairly straight sort of guy" would be damaged by a shift that so smacked of opportunism. To turn a Criminal Justice Bill — concerned with teenage tearaways — into a conduit for a completely different subject would be a juvenile offence of Jack Straw's making. A proposal that should attract all-party support would become a battlefield.

The House of Lords might not play the losing role that has been scripted. Once Mr Blair had declared war, their present self-restraint — on devolution and the incorporation of the European Convention — could disappear very swiftly. It is possible that a Criminal Justice Bill that included an anti-hunting measure might be lost in the Upper House — and with a majority of life peers against it. If so, the Prime Minister would find his fox shot to pieces. Even if that did not occur, two can play at populist posturing. The Conservatives in the Lords could vote down the welfare reforms that had split the Labour Party. A *de facto* alliance between Viscount Cranborne and Dennis Skinner might be improbable but it would embarrass the Government.

The Prime Minister should instead contemplate the lessons of Bosnia: diplomacy and negotiation can be preferable to outright conflict. The Government should initiate a Countryside Commission to examine every aspect of field sports including foxhunting. This would report in time to allow for another debate and vote — a more informed one on all sides — during this Parliament. The fate of the fox must be determined on its merits. It should not be used as a trap for the hereditary peerage.

THE ENGLISH FOOL

and other delights of the new old cooking

In most countries, the culinary arts are an essential and popular component of national heritage. Indeed, France rarely misses an opportunity, in myth as in braggadocio, to extol its incomparable cuisine. How different from this place across the Channel. English food has been the butt of jokes for so long that most people have forgotten there ever existed a tradition of excellence here. Yet fashion, has rediscovered ancient recipes that once fed the corpulent frames of yeomen and harnessed the fruits of the land in delicious abundance. English fare is the coming cookery trend.

The words alone tease the senses and set the mouth watering: pies and game, haunches and saddles, stews, crumble, fools and puddings. The list suggests foods that are uncomplicated but substantial, dishes that use native ingredients to create the flavours of the English countryside. They conjure up the banquetting of Tudor courts, feasting in medieval monasteries and great psalms kitchens where oxen, venison and boar were roasted in profusion.

Old recipe books give vital clues to this lost English culture (Scotland and Ireland naturally have different gastronomic traditions). They are filled with native garnishes that are a far cry from the

tarragon and coriander accessories of today's ubiquitous Euro-Med cuisine: prunes and honey, marzipan and currants, butter, wine, salt and meat. The dinners were vast servings of meats and game, fatty broths and elaborately decorated cakes. In damp monasteries and draughty halls our forebears needed a huge intake of calories to keep them warm.

Consider what now passes for new British cuisine: it is, in truth, a ragbag of all the dishes of the world, with a pinch of curry, a sprig of basil and a clove of garlic. Very little of this harks back to early cookery books or the magnificent Mrs Beeton. Yet among today's television cooks there are again some long-forgotten offerings. The Two Fat Ladies, especially, delight in old-fashioned recipes that recall the days when calories were uncountable: and their figures lend weight to this solid tradition.

Other countries, too, are rediscovering the ancestral secrets, before food was fast or pre-packaged. Italy is intrigued by the recreation, in print and imagination, of Gargantuan medieval banquets. France is mounting a spirited defence against new, quick dishes that dispense with sauces and tradition. Britain has furthest to go. But there is a fine feast at the end of the quest.

Defence business tactics 'not smart'

From Mr Tony Purton
Sir, Earlier this month the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, invited British defence firms to form a "smart procurement partnership" with his Chief of Defence Procurement, to introduce "modern business methods to solve our deep-seated procurement problems".

In my experience, most of the deep-seated problems in British defence procurement stem from British industry's inability to honour contractual commitments — eg, the Challenger II tank — and MoD's propensity to let them get away with it.

One wonders how far this trend will develop. Can we look forward to the Home Secretary engaging the leaders of Britain's organised crime syndicates to help him review police crime-prevention procedures — "partners in crime"?

In 1980, the chief executive of one of Britain's largest defence companies proposed to the Defence Secretary that the crippling bureaucracy of formal defence procurement could be swept aside simply by telling each major British defence contractor what his share of the defence budget would be each year, leaving it to the companies to deliver weapons to that value best suited to their individual business strategies.

It took that Government two years to see through the idea and decline it; but at least they had the sense to say no. Will our new Government find the maturity to see through this repeat move, 17 years on? There is nothing new in this world — not even "smart procurement".

Yours faithfully,
TONY PURTON
(Director of Contracts, MoD, 1988-93),
48 Kent Avenue, Ealing, W13,
November 27.

Tory blight

From Sir David Goodall
Sir, Mr William Hague's dismal rating with his own supporters as well as the country at large (report, November 27) should cause serious heart-searching within the Conservative Party.

With the Left in temporary eclipse, Mr Blair is managing to present the voter with a skilful blend of economic realism, social concern and a modernising but fundamentally respectful attitude to the monarchy — and so, by implication, to the strength of tradition in British life.

Mr Blair's own Christian convictions, unpalatable though they are to many on the Left, have not been disguised. By contrast, Mr Hague's lightweight populism and opportunistic espousal of fashionably progressive attitudes, which to my mind devalue marriage and the family, only alienate traditional Conservative voters without impressing Labour ones.

The Conservative Party certainly needs to heal its internal divisions and moderate the ideological stridency of its right wing; but it would stand a better chance of recovering some of its lost support if it also gave the impression of having values (other than economic ones) which it wants to conserve.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GOODALL,
Greystones,
Ampleforth, York,
November 27.

Tory leadership

From Mr John E. Strafford
Sir, What an excellent letter today from John Horam, MP, on the procedure for election of the leader of the Conservative Party.

I would only add that when the final two or three candidates are put to all party members on a one person, one vote basis, they should have a minimum of 25 per cent of the votes of MPs. This would ensure that there is substantial support for them within the parliamentary party.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN E. STRAFFORD
(Chairman, Campaign for Conservative Party Democracy),
Perama, Fulmer Road,
Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire,
November 27.

Cigarette age limit

From Mr Paul Mason
Sir, Tessa Jowell (report, "Age for buying cigarettes to be raised to 18", November 27) states that "tobacco is not welcome the change", but for retailers such as myself, simply raising the age limit will have no effect. The onus is still on us to decide a person's age.

What is required is a government-backed national identity scheme. This would enable retailers to make a decision without the fear of being threatened or prosecuted.

I would never knowingly sell to an under-16, but without an ID card, how are we to know?

Yours etc,
PAUL MASON
(National spokesman),
Tobacco Alliance,
Haymarket House,
28-29 Haymarket, SW1,
November 27.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Lessons of Hampstead traffic horror

From Mr Andy Spring
Sir, The broad range of views expressed in your coverage of the current debate over traffic in Hampstead, North London (reports, leading article and Go, November 22) raises some interesting questions.

The experience of the Royal School in Hampstead shows very clearly that if targets for traffic reduction are set, local solutions can be found quickly and easily to meet those targets without in any way limiting mobility. It also shows that there is a great deal of willingness on the part of motorists to participate in such traffic-reduction schemes. Its success is in no way dependent on government or local authorities providing alternatives.

Clearly the provision of alternatives to driving is vital. However, too often this is used as an excuse to shift the responsibility for action on to government: as we sit fuming in our traffic jams, we wait for somebody else to take the initiative. We can and must develop our own local alternatives.

The greater danger, as Peter Barnard implies in his article in Go, is that under the Transport Minister's proposals we may have even more buses and trains, but no fewer cars. Between 1981 and 1986 the GLC's fares policy increased public-transport usage but did not decrease the growth in road traffic. Investment in integrated transport must be a part of an overall strategy to reduce traffic, and the health, environmental and social problems it can cause.

Yours,
ANDY SPRING,
Flat 3, 36 Village Road,
Enfield, Middlesex,
November 24.

From Mr Richard Phillips
Sir, One way to curb the menace of commuter parking in residential streets is to impose selective restrictions. A residents-only zone applicable from 8am to 10am would discourage most all-day parkers whilst causing little disruption to local businesses and those visiting the area. The timing of the restriction could be varied to suit local needs — between 2pm and 4pm, for instance.

Far more attention needs to be given to the local needs of residents. I used to live near a five-screen cinema in Chelsea and, in the evenings, when there was most pressure on parking spaces, parking restrictions did not apply. If the parking restrictions had

continued to be enforced for a further hour, until 7.30pm, I might have had some hope of finding a space near my house when I returned of an evening.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD PHILLIPS,
10 Broughton Avenue, Ham, Surrey,
November 22.

From Mr Paul Lambert
Sir, As an environmentally friendly London car owner and parking-permit holder, I recently contacted Westminster Council to ask if I could sell my car and use the permit for hire cars whenever I needed one.

The response was that I would have to visit the council offices each time I hired a car to obtain a permit showing the hired car's registration details.

A scheme that allows residents to hire cars occasionally and park them in residents' parking zones without such red tape would surely be a step in the right direction with regard to reducing car ownership?

Yours,
PAUL LAMBERT,
103 Randolph Avenue,
Maida Vale, W9,
crescendosofmwre@msn.com
November 26.

From the Headmaster of Queens' School, Bushey
Sir, "Schools appear indifferent to the problems of parking, traffic control and pollution... state schools must tackle the traffic" (leading article, November 22). I agree.

Mr Blunkett should immediately introduce league tables which would allow parents to monitor the traffic policies of schools. Only then will we force these schools to address the key issues which we pay them to address instead of allowing them to waste their energies on such nebulous concepts as "raising standards". Schools should be made to write action plans based on ambitious targets to reduce pollution, failure to achieve which will be treated with zero tolerance.

The world will then be free for moralising newspaper editors to dispatch thousands of diesel-belching vehicles every night to distribute their wise guidance to the nation.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS NELSON,
Headmaster,
Queens' School, Aldenham Road,
Bushey, Watford, Hertfordshire,
November 24.

Trawler recovery

From Mr Michael Shrimpton
Sir, The remarkable effort of the families of the men who went down on the Peterhead fishing vessel *Sapphire* (report, November 24) to raise £400,000 to fund the recovery is to be applauded, but why should they have had to pay for it?

I had always understood that the recovery of the remains of those lost at sea, on a British vessel in British waters, so that they might be given a proper burial in accordance with the wishes of their families, was a function of government.

Having this month spent 10 days at

sea on a Peterhead boat, studying the operation of the absurd common fisheries policy at first hand, I know that the refusal of the Government to help the families of those lost on the *Sapphire* has caused much fully justified local resentment.

It is not too late for a change of heart, assuming that the Government has got one.

I have the honour to remain, Sir, Your humble and obedient servant,
MICHAEL SHRIMPTON,
Chambers of Andrew Thompson and David Gray,
Francis Taylor Building,
3rd Floor, Temple, EC4,
November 26.

Away from home

From Mr John A. Jenkinson
Sir, Nigella Lawson (November 26) has some very quaint ideas on boarding schools, seeing some of them as open to sexual exploitation and a brutal haven for rejected children.

I never felt rejected and I was never sexually exploited. The whole ten years' boarding experience was just super fun, in a way that a day school is unable to replicate.

We briefly tried day school with our children but it meant that they spent nine to ten hours a week just travelling. They had scant opportunity for extra activities or for their friends.

Why should I condemn them to a life of "up early, car or coach, lessons, car or coach home, homework, quick solitary playtime (or sadly these days mind-numbing TV) and bed" just because I selfishly want to keep them with me?

No, if you're lucky enough to be able to afford it, give them the opportunity of a full life at a good boarding school: they'll appreciate their loving home even more.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN A. JENKINSON,
Old Rectory, Harvington,
Evesham, Worcestershire,
November 28.

Albuquerque to Essex

From Mr Ian Sanders
Sir, I was heartened by the story of the Neuhoft family, fleeing the dreadful conditions in their native Albuquerque (report, November 21; letters, November 25). However, I am surprised that on arrival here they were not imprisoned without trial and then forcibly deported, as seems to be traditional in cases such as these.

Can anybody explain this strange oversight on the part of the immigration authorities?

Yours faithfully,
IAN SANDERS,
Vanbrugh College,
University of York,
Heslington, York YO1 5DD,
is102@york.ac.uk
November 25.

Car park threat to Greenwich field

From Mr Richard Bourn
Sir, Whatever the merits of the Millennium Exhibition itself, there were at least two good reasons for choosing Greenwich as its location instead of a greenfield site near Birmingham.

First, it was better to use restored derelict urban land than to build in the countryside. Second, Greenwich offered the potential of reaching the exhibition entirely by public transport while Birmingham was touted for its proximity to the motorway network and its ease of access by car.

Both these advantages are in danger of being squandered. On December 1 Greenwich Council is to consider an application to build a massive 1,400-space car park on Falconwood Field, lying immediately south of Oxleas Wood, which is designated as a site of special scientific interest, and some four miles from the Dome, this ten-acre field enjoys the designation of metropolitan open land (unique to London) as an area of "historic, nature-conservation or habitat interest of metropolitan or national value". To lose it is the local equivalent of sacrificing part of Hyde Park, Hampstead Heath or Richmond Park.

Falconwood Field would provide only a fraction of the 9,000 car parking spaces the exhibition organisers want. The exhibition has also been used as justification for enlarging the A102 from six to eight lanes south of the four-lane Blackwall Tunnel, and for the recent decision in the accelerated roads review to spend £145 million on "improvements" of the A13 just north of the river.

The "Millennium Experience" would give a much better account of modern Britain if it displayed a proper regard for valued open space, vital to the wellbeing of the urban environment, and an understanding that a modern transport system does not depend on unnecessary car use.

We hope that Greenwich Council has thought about these matters more carefully than others appear to have done.

Yours sincerely,
RICHARD BOURN
(Campaigns and Development Officer),
CPRE London Branch,
5 Cowcross Street, EC1,
November 27.

From the Managing Director of Beaver & Tapley Ltd
Sir, To conform with the relevant British Standard, we are obliged to stick labels on to the glass-door cabinets that we manufacture stating: "Do not hit the glass with hard or sharp objects."

Yours faithfully,
ROGER RICHARDSON,
Managing Director,
Beaver & Tapley Ltd,
Scots Road, Southall, Middlesex,
November 26.

From Mr R. K. Day
Sir, Instructions printed on the hand-drier in the gents' loo in a five-star hotel in Cabonore, Botswana: Shake water off hands. Rub gently under blower. Wipe on shirt.

Yours faithfully,
R. K. DAY,
Crownstee House, Crownstee Lane, Comberbach, Cheshire,
November 25.

Warm front?

From Mrs Eileen M. Clarke
Sir, November 28 and my husband is still not wearing his vest.

Is this clear evidence of global warming?

Yours faithfully,
EILEEN M. CLARKE,
Norfields, Greenfield Road,
Stonesfield, Oxfordshire,
November 28.

All-embracing terms

From Mr John Ratcliffe
Sir, May I suggest that a suitable replacement for "to develop" and "development" (letter, November 28), which would express more precise connotations, would be "to envelop" and "envelope".

Yours faithfully,
JOHN RATCLIFFE,
18 Castle Lane, Warwick,
November 28.

Proceed with care

From Dr Antony Warren
Sir, The NHS General Ophthalmic Services prescription that my daughter recently obtained from the optician for long-sightedness bears the instruction: "Read the rest of this form before you get your spectacles" (letters, November 11, 13, 18, 24, 26).

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY WARREN,
4 Pearce Close, Cambridge,
November 27.

From Mr F. E. Hobbs

Sir, I am advised to remove the dust from the lenses of my binoculars with a camel's hairbrush.

Yours sincerely,
F. E. HOBBS,
120 Bridgton Road,
Compton, Wolverhampton.

From the Managing Director of Beaver & Tapley Ltd

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Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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PHARMACEUTICALS

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Tokyo
banking



REVIVAL 30
Gentlemen's clubs are reinvented

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY

SECTION 2 PAGES 51-64

BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 1997

Cabinet backs plan to save coal industry

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE GOVERNMENT is looking at detailed plans to save the coal industry, amid the growing controversy over impending pit closures and the loss of thousands of jobs.

An initiative from No 10 Downing Street looks at measures to ensure the industry's survival over the next five to seven years. These could include pushing up coal stocks at electricity generators and altering the balance of use between gas and coal.

Richard Caborn, Minister for the Regions and John Prescott's number two at the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions, has been given a key role. The move reflects the Cabinet's concern over the coal crisis in the wake of warnings from the Deputy Prime Minister on the consequences of allowing the industry to go to the wall.

Measures to support coal over the medium term would not halt all the pit closures expected to be announced soon by RJB Mining, the UK's biggest coal producer. But they would ensure the future of the industry and about 40,000 jobs. Next year 10,000 jobs could go - 5,000 from pit closures and 5,000 in related industries.

Mr Caborn has been involved not only as Mr Prescott's right-hand man but because he chaired the last Trade and Industry committee on coal. He is also in charge of open-cast mining policy. Labour sources say that many of the recommendations from the committee's inquiry will be reinstated. They include making the generators stockpile coal and giving government

support to clean-coal technology - ways to reduce coal's emissions in generation.

The move takes the issue beyond the Department of Trade and Industry, which has been widely criticised for not establishing an energy policy and for allowing the present crisis to develop without offering any future for coal. The looming pit closures have been triggered by a fall in the market for RJB's coal as generators have switched to gas or imported coal or bought it from smaller producers.

Mr Caborn is believed to have given warning that if nothing is done for coal now then the Government would face another crisis when the bulk of RJB's new contracts expire in three years, close to a general election.

The Government is looking at maintaining deep-mine coal production at about 20 million tonnes a year over the next five to seven years, compared with 31 million tonnes this year. After three years it is expected

market demand for coal will drop to ten million tonnes. So the Government is looking at providing a need for ten million extra tonnes a year.

Ironically for RJB, some of the extra need for deep-mined coal could come from a reduction in open-cast coal, an operation in which the company is strongly involved.

Mr Caborn is expected to report soon on new planning provisions needed for open-cast mining, which is detested by environmentalists. He is likely to tighten requirements, which would lead to a gradual reduction in output from open-cast pits.

Yesterday RJB made 78 miners redundant at Clipstone colliery in Nottinghamshire as it reduced output. It asked for volunteers but said that it would make selections if not enough men came forward.

The move is seen by the unions as reassuring for the future of the colliery since yesterday's cuts would not have been made if a full closure was in the offing.

RJB meets on Monday to start drafting plans for the closure of collieries.

There was confusion yesterday over whether RJB, represented by Richard Budge, its chief executive, will be at next week's Trade and Industry committee investigation into coal. The committee had not invited the company to attend because it had asked the trade association to attend instead. But a spokesman for Martin O'Neill, the committee chairman, said that Mr Budge could appear if he wanted.

Commentary, page 29



Budge: confusion



Fortune fades: the share price fell wiped £9.25 million off Alan Sugar's Viglen stake

Viglen less sweet for Sugar

By FRASER NELSON

ALAN SUGAR, the founder of Amstrad, yesterday saw £9.25 million wiped from the value of his remaining holding in Viglen Technology after the newly demerged PC-maker warned the market that it was suffering from stiff competition in the Christmas market.

The warning, which comes three months after Viglen's market debut, sent its shares down 31 per cent to 50p. This leaves the company worth £61 million, compared with its £73 million value at the time of the demerger.

It said it was still selling about 85,000 computers a year, but blamed "oversupply of components" for a drop in profits. City analysts now ex-

pect the company to make £11.5 million profit this year, against the £12.4 million expected when the company floated. Viglen singled out the drop in memory chip prices, saying the cost of the Ram memory used for its computers has plunged 35 per cent in the past month.

Mr Sugar planned to cut his holding from 33 per cent to 10 per cent, but changed his mind in August, saying the 60p issue price was too cheap. His decision has cost him £4.1 million.

Viglen started off in the home of Vig Boyd and Len Davis, Armenian computer engineers, in 1965. It was bought by Amstrad three years ago and demerged in August. Tempus, page 31

Walker Wingsail chairman confident of victory

By PAUL DURMAN

HUNDREDS of small investors in Walker Wingsail Systems, which has spent £12 million developing boats with metal sails, have rallied to support John Walker in his battle against an attempt to force him to resign as the company's chairman.

Mr Walker, who has spent much of the past 30 years working on his idea, is confident of defeating a group of dissident shareholders at today's annual meeting at the Devonport naval dockyard in Plymouth.

He said yesterday that he had received about 1,200 proxy votes backing the adoption of the latest Walker Wingsail accounts, and only 200 against.

Mr Walker is expecting about 330 shareholders to turn up to today's meeting, which, at the eleventh hour, has been moved to a specially erected marquee within the dockyard itself. Although his opponents include some of the company's wealthier and larger shareholders, he still expects to win comfortably.

Once helped along the way with backing from Prudential, Walker Wingsail has struggled for years to commercialise the wingsail technology - aircraft-style wings which, when mounted vertically and controlled by computer, are said to make sailing easier.

His critics complain of Mr Walker's repeated failure to keep to his business plan forecasts, which has required him to regularly return to shareholders for more money. Walker Wingsail has about 6,700 investors - more than some quoted companies. Many seem to be engineers or others excited by the potential of the wingsail idea.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	4831.8	(-57.2)
FTSE All share	2268.64	(-20.33)
Nikkei	16636.26	(+33.06)
New York	7823.13	(+28.35)
Dow Jones	955.40	(+3.76)

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5%	(unch)
Long Bond	101%	(unch)

LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	7%	(7%)
1/16 long gil	119%	(118%)

STERLING		
New York	1.6873	(unch)
London	1.6848	(1.6745)
Sfr	2.9717	(2.9541)
FF	9.9461	(9.8854)
Sfr	2.4020	(2.3856)
Yen	215.02	(212.81)
£ Index	105.0	(104.4)

DOLLAR		
London	1.7551	(unch)
Sfr	5.5070	(unch)
FF	1.4255	(unch)
Yen	127.08	(127.3)
£ Index	107.3	(107.2)

NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Feb)	\$18.90	(\$18.70)

GOLD		
London close	\$296.95	(\$296.00)

TOKYO CLOSE		
Yen 100	127.86	(127.86)

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Further woe at Laura Ashley

THE WOES of Laura Ashley continued yesterday after Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, the fashion and textile retailer's house broker, warned the market that the company will face a £15 million loss this year - double the £7 million it was expected to lose.

The downgrade triggered a further 8.7 per cent plunge in the shares, which closed at 41p, as City analysts began to fear a serious cashflow crisis which can only be resolved through a rescue rights issue.

Errors in 29% of DIY tax forms

By CLARE STEWART

AROUND 29 per cent of the new self-assessment tax forms have been incorrectly completed, according to the Inland Revenue. Six per cent - or 300,000 forms - have had to be returned to taxpayers.

The level of errors will renew concern over the complexity of the new forms, although the Revenue said that errors on 1.15 million forms were minor, and were corrected by staff. On forms returned, errors included simple mistakes such as the taxpayer forgetting to sign it.

The Revenue has played down fears that taxpayers are struggling to understand self-assessment. With five million forms returned out of eight million sent out in April, a spokesman said: "We are pleased with progress." The Revenue had estimated that up to 45 per cent of forms might be wrongly completed, with up to 10 per cent having to be sent back.

Tokyo looks at banking bailout

FROM CARL MORTISHED IN TOKYO

THE Japanese Government is considering a major restructuring of the Trust Fund Bureau, the body responsible for financing large infrastructure projects, to secure funds to bail out Japan's troubled banking industry.

Officials in the Ministry of Finance are believed to be looking at a number of options that could include the sale of land holdings. The Trust Fund Bureau, which is under the authority of the ministry, has backed huge infrastructure projects with funding from postal savings and pensions. However, it is believed that a substantial number of the loans are not paying interest. Some ¥55 trillion (£250 billion) is believed to be under water.

The ministry is believed to be keen to use the Trust Fund Bureau and its postal savings money to help to restructure the debt-laden banking industry, which recently suffered

four failures, including that of Yamaichi Securities.

Use of postal savings to shore up problem banks would meet with opposition. The Trust Fund Bureau's had debts need to be addressed to secure more funds from postal savings. The Finance Ministry is believed to be considering packaging the debts and shifting them to the General Account. No decisions have been made, but one possibility is a change in legislation that would permit the sale of forestry and valuable land holdings.

The Government's dilemma stems from high levels of public debt and fears that weakness in the financial sector could raise the cost of public borrowing. Observers believe that Japan faces a growing crisis because the current level of long-term debt is believed to be nearing ten times the level of retained tax earnings. The equivalent US multiple is 4-5 times.

Barclays shuts BZW in Japan

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

BARCLAYS has announced the closure of the Japanese equities arm of BZW, the investment banking division it is in the process of selling, with the loss of 100 jobs.

The move reduces the bank's staff in Japan to 450. Barclays insisted the move was a direct result of its decision to sell the equity, capital markets and mergers and acquisition activities of BZW last month.

The bank has already come under fire for selling BZW's European business to Credit Suisse First Boston at a low price of £100 million. It said it had been unable to get a good price for the Japanese equities business because it had not included its membership of Japan's three main stock exchanges in the deal. However, the bank is in talks with several banks interested in buying BZW's Asian and Australasian businesses.

SIEMENS

Oh...pink fluffy slippers!
How novel.
And with a little piggy motif too.
Super.



This Christmas, get to Santa before he gets to you. Ask for the new Siemens S10, which has just been voted the Best Business Mobile in the World by Connect magazine and which comes with 10 hours of free, the world's first colour display and a voice mail function.

Better Talkology from Siemens.

A WEEK IN THE CITY

Whichever way you turned, the company that brews a certain Irish stout was in the news as the report into the Guinness affair finally saw the light of day 11 years after the Distillers takeover. While the Guinness corporate name was voted into oblivion after 240 years.

Monday saw a member of the reclusive Barclay family make a rare public appearance, although it was neither of the Barclay twins, David and Frederick, but David's son, Aidan. Barclay fils took the stand at Horseferry Road Magistrates' Court in an attempt to persuade the gaming authorities to grant a new casino licence to the Ritz, the £75 million jewel in the Barclay crown, when London Clubs moves out next year.

A decision is not due until next month, but the opposition of the Gaming Board

means the odds are stacked against him.

The City felt the effects of the mounting crisis in Japan, as Yamaichi, the country's fourth largest broker, collapsed under a ¥32 trillion (£15 billion) mountain of debt. The crash, announced by a sobbing Shohel Norawa, president of Yamaichi, sent a chill through world financial markets, and spelt the end of 300 jobs at the firm's London HQ.

In the circumstances, the rejection by Allied Colloids of a £1.1 billion bid from Hercules, a rival chemicals group from America, created comparatively few ripples.

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, took a further step in his efforts to woo big business by unveiling plans to abolish advance corporation tax and cut the rate of corporation tax in his pre-Budget speech to the Commons. The welcome his comments received was in

marked contrast to the treatment his calls for pay restraint received from the Post Office: it announced a 4 per cent pay deal with its 160,000 mail workers.

Not so lucky were the 5,000 or so miners who are expected to be given their marching orders before Christmas as RJB Mining closes more pits.

The Guinness EGM on Wednesday to approve the £23 billion merger with Grand Metropolitan became a vehicle for disgruntled shareholders keen to attack Tony Greener, chairman, over the choice of Diageo as the new drinks behemoth's name.

However, a rather embarrassing split vote in the audience failed to make a dent on the overwhelming support of proxy votes.

The next day, ironically the same day as the annual Guinness and oysters bash at Mansion House, saw the

publication of the eagerly awaited report into the 1986 Distillers scandal. As expected, Ernest Saunders, the former Guinness chief executive, came in for a pounding, but of greater significance was the doubt cast by the report over the evidence given by David Mayhew, a senior partner in Cazenove, the blue-blooded City stockbroker.

In a damning indictment of the integrity of the City, the report - watered down from earlier drafts - went on to refer to "the cynical disregard of laws and regulations; the cavalier misuse of company moneys and a contempt for truth and common honesty".

The week ended in the same part of the world as it had started, as Barclays announced plans to close its Japanese equities business with the loss of 100 jobs.

DOMINIC WALSH

Volatile market holds no fears for Energis chief

By Raymond Snoddy

SHARES in Energis are due to begin trading on December 9 against a backdrop of world market volatility and after a sharp drop in the share price of Iona, the innovative telecoms company that floated during the summer.

Mike Grabner, the chief executive of Energis, has just emerged from a fortnight's roadshow that has taken him to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paris and Frankfurt, drumming up support for the issue. He remains optimistic about how the offering of 26 per cent of the company is being received.

"There is significant interest regardless of the markets," he said. "I think it is a good investment story and people are treating it as such."

He can also point to the significant differences between Energis and Iona, which is using radio to target mainly the residential market and has fallen from grace, at least temporarily, in the City because of delays in rolling out its network.

"We are very much stressing that we are at a very advanced stage of development," he added. As a company aiming entirely at

the business sector, rather than the residential market, the Energis chief executive believes the comparisons should be with telecommunications companies such as Colt or WorldCom, rather than Iona.

The book on Energis closes on December 8 and the shares of the company begin trading the next day on both the London Stock Exchange and on Nasdaq.

Because of its parent, National Grid, Energis was able to build a high-capacity, low-cost, fibre-optic network carried on electricity pylons. Since signing up its first customer in March 1994, Energis now provides services at more than 35,000 sites for customers ranging from Boots and Microsoft to Mirror Group Newspapers, and Virgin Atlantic to the BBC, which has a ten-year, £100 million contract.

Its strategy has been to target first individual companies and use them as a lead into sectors. The Energis relationship with Boots, for example, started as a contract worth about £1 million a year. This increased to £2.5 million when more sites and services were



Mike Grabner, left, with Chris Hibbert, finance director

Peregrine blames poor trading for 275 layoffs

By Our Financial Staff

PEREGRINE Investments has laid off about 275 staff from its worldwide operations because of poor market conditions across Asia.

Most of the affected staff worked outside Hong Kong or were based in the region specialising in markets excluding Greater China, the investment banking group said in a statement. The cost of the losses would be taken as an exceptional item in the year to November 30, 1997, it said.

Peregrine said: "While volatility was beginning to subside in Asia's debt and equity markets, trading volumes were shrinking on the back of decreased liquidity. The group anticipates these conditions will persist, which has resulted in the action taken."

Peregrine Investments said last month that net profits in its equity products business for the period January 1 to October 24 had fallen by about HK\$178 million (£13.8 million) to about HK\$124 million because of trading losses. However, it said there was no truth in rumours that it might be in serious financial trouble and suffer a loss of up to US\$1 billion (£600 million).

Peregrine also announced this month that Zurich Centre Investments, the private equity arm of the Zurich Group, had agreed to invest US\$200 million in the company.

West Bromwich to cut mortgage rates

THE West Bromwich Building Society is to cut its mortgage rate by 0.25 percentage points to 8.2 per cent from Monday. The society is also lifting rates for savers by 0.25 points across the board. In spite of the recent increases in base rates, the West Bromwich's proposed changes fulfil a pledge that was made at the society's annual meeting in July. The change in mortgage rate applies to holders of variable rate loans.

The society is also offering about half its 400,000 members who have held accounts for more than two years a privileged membership package, which includes benefits such as commission-free holiday money, discounted travel insurance and preferential rates on unsecured personal loans. The rate changes bring the West Bromwich back into line with other building societies, a spokesman said. The move may also be seen as a measure to reinforce customer loyalty to the building society, which has been tipped as a possible takeover target.

Bristol Water vote call

BRISTOL WATER wants to throw the next pricing plan open to customer comment in the wake of signals from the regulator that there could be a substantial one-off cut in bills. Bristol wants to ask customers whether they would want the reduction as cash off their bills or whether they would prefer some to be spent on environmental improvements or improved services. Ian Byatt, the regulator, has begun consultations for his next price review, due in 2000. It is thought he could impose a one-off cut of more than 10 per cent on bills. Bristol Water lifted pre-tax profits for the six months to September 30 7 per cent to £7.8 million. The interim dividend, payable on February 10, is up 9.6 per cent to 17.15p.

New chief for generator

BRITISH ENERGY has filled its chief executive gap following the departure in June of Bob Hawley. The new boss at the nuclear generator will be Peter Hollins, who joins from ICI. He was responsible for polymers at European Vinyls Corporation, a joint venture between ICI and Enichem. Mr Hollins will join British Energy in February. John Robb, the generator's chairman, said: "I am confident that he has the skills and experience necessary to lead British Energy in the next stages of its development."

Midlands repays £22m

MIDLANDS ELECTRICITY is to give £22 million in customer rebates next year in an effort to retain customers before competition is introduced in the domestic market. Midlands said it would give £10 per household as it fired a warning shot against an investigation by the industry regulators into electricity companies offering gas. It said the "dual fuel" inquiry could stifle competition. Gas companies complain that some electricity companies are engaging in predatory pricing in the gas market, which opens to competition before electricity.

Toyota still undecided

TOYOTA, the Japanese car group, is expected to announce in the new year if its planned new small European car will be built at its British plant at Burnaston, Derbyshire. Toyota was responding to suggestions that it might instead choose a French plant for the new car. Toyota GB said: "No decision has yet been taken." The new car is scheduled to be launched in 1999 and will resemble the Japanese-built Starlet. Toyota has invested heavily at Burnaston in the Nineties. The company will launch the Avenis, which will be built there, in January.

Clowes charged with accounting offences

By Our City Staff

PETER CLOWES, the disgraced former financier who was given a ten-year jail sentence for defrauding investors of £16 million, has now been charged with accounting offences.

The 53-year-old former millionaire has been charged with two offences of false accounting and bailed to appear next month before magistrates at Macclesfield, Cheshire, where he now lives. The charges are believed to be connected with claims for benefits.

Clowes' firm, Barlow Clowes International, collapsed in 1988 owing investors £190 million.

He was freed from prison early last year after serving four years. When he returned to live with his family in a terraced cottage in Macclesfield, he vowed to work to repay investors who had lost their savings in the collapse.

Early this year, Clowes, who was living on income support, said he was developing a computer project that he had devised in jail. He said that if he ever made money from the plan, it would go to the people who lost out in the Barlow Clowes crash.

Abbot wins Azerbaijan contract

ABBOT said its subsidiary, KCA Drilling, had been awarded a \$32 million (£19 million) flagship contract by the Azerbaijan International Operating Company for the drilling platform for the development of the Azeri Chirag and Guneshli offshore fields (Our City Staff writes).

The work covers the provision and initial three years of operation of drilling facilities on two platforms. A letter of limited award has been signed to cover the initial 30 to 40-day period required until the formal contract is prepared and signed.

Arbitron moves into UK to bid for radio contract

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

ARBITRON, a large American market research group, is moving into the UK through the purchase of Continental Research, the British market research group specialising in the media and communications.

The acquisition is the first stage of Arbitron's plans to expand beyond the North American market, where it supplies research for television and radio stations as well as cable and advertising agencies.

Arbitron plans to use the

Continental purchase to launch a bid for the UK radio industry audience research contract that is going to be put out for tender in the next few months by RAJAR, the combined-industry ratings organisation.

At the same time as Arbitron is making its move into the UK market, Taylor Nelson AGB, one of the UK's leading ratings organisations, has been moving in the opposite direction by trying to establish a foothold in the North American television ratings measuring business.

Under the deal with Continental, the organisation will retain its name, while its founder-directors and senior management will continue to manage the UK business.

Last year Arbitron, part of the Ceridian Corporation, the information services group, had revenues of £153.1 million (£91.7 million). The largest Arbitron division, Arbitron Radio, measures and analyses radio audiences and consumer behaviour in 268 local markets.

Cliveden to open Edinburgh hotel

By Dominic Walsh

CLIVEDEN, the luxury hotel group, is to buy a Grade A listed building in Edinburgh's St Andrew Square for development as a 64-bedroom hotel and health club. Total cost of the project is estimated at about £12 million.

The company is acquiring the Victorian building from Scottish Equitable, subject to planning consent. It is thought to be paying close to the £5 million asking price. About £7 million will be spent converting it into a five-star hotel, with its own underground carpark and a separate health club. John Tham, managing

director of Cliveden, said the group continued to seek acquisition opportunities. It was still "looking hard" for a site in Paris and was the preferred developer for a palace in Prague, pending the outcome of a legal battle over the property's ownership.

Since its flotation in April 1996, the group has added the Royal Crescent in Bath and the Cliveden Town House in central London. It has also developed a country club at the eponymous Buckinghamshire stately home, made famous by the Profumo affair of the Sixties.

Paramount in the red

By Dominic Walsh

BAD debts and payoffs to directors and staff pushed Paramount, the troubled pub operator, into the red by £1.4 million in the year to May 31.

The company's new management, installed in July, also announced that a financial review had shown the previous year's results to be overstated by £1 million, resulting in a loss in 1996 of £7.39 million.

Most of those losses were property value write-downs,

with the extra £1 million being a provision for bad debt.

John Dangerfield, finance director, said that tight credit controls had been put in place to prevent further bad debts, although these had resulted in a 5 per cent decline in sales to £5.6 million.

He added that Paramount was now trading profitably and was considering a range of ways to expand the company from its present estate of 115 tenanted pubs.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.56	2.38
Austria Sch	21.85	20.19
Belgium Fr	64.32	59.36
Canada \$	2.14	2.32
Cyprus Cyp£	0.911	0.859
Denmark Kr	11.27	10.96
Finland Mk	5.51	8.76
France Fr	10.36	9.60
Germany Dm	3.13	2.86
Greece Dr	481	432
Hong Kong \$	13.81	12.61
Ireland P	1.19	1.10
Israel Sh	6.55	5.66
Italy Lira	3079	2642
Japan Yen	229.53	211.70
Malta	0.665	0.628
Netherlands Gld	3.530	3.235
New Zealand \$	2.68	2.64
Norway Kr	12.56	11.74
Portugal Esc	315.03	282.00
S Africa Rd	8.96	7.90
Spain Ptas	261.79	243.00
Sweden Kr	13.78	12.65
Switzerland Fr	2.55	2.33
Turkey Lira	335457	313279
USA \$	1.785	1.642

Prices for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

When Tsugio Yukihira, Yamaichi's former chairman, admitted: "If my company had disclosed problem assets, it would not have been able to survive," it was a nasty reminder of just how murky Japanese finance can be...

Garth Alexander examines whether enough is being done to sort out Japan's problems. Business. The Sunday Times, tomorrow.

Good news for NatWest savers

NatWest announces the following interest rates, effective from 1 December 1997:

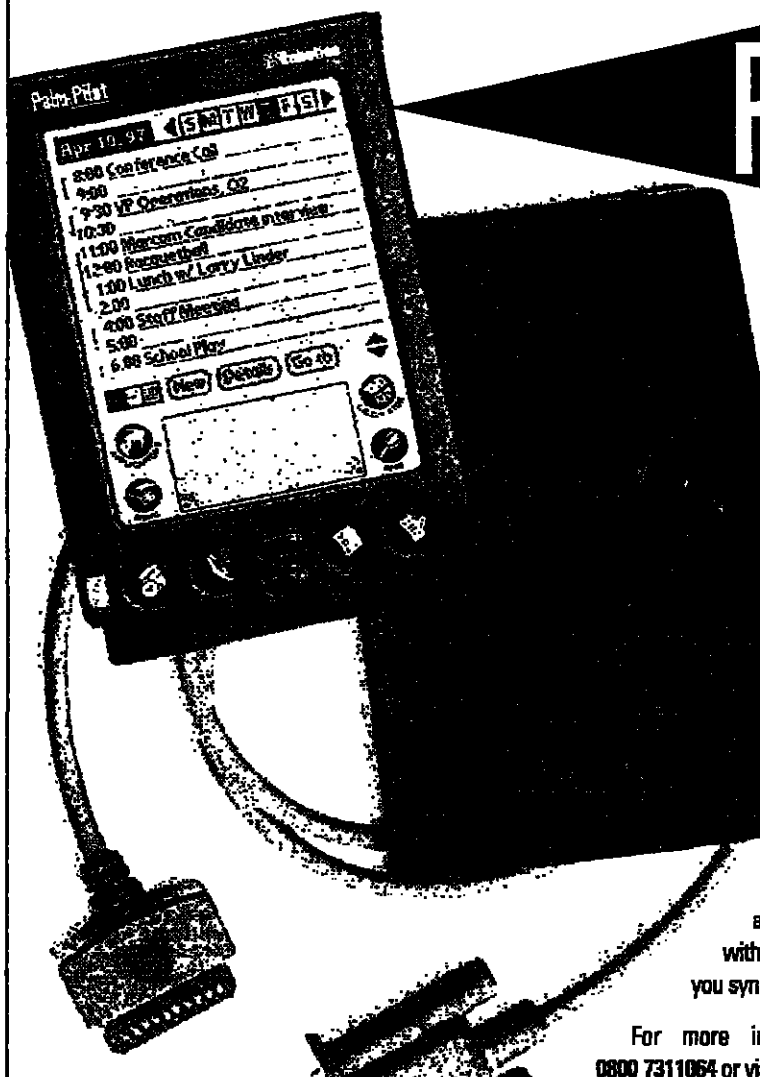
Savings			
	Gross Rate per annum (%)	Gross CAR (%)	Net Rate per annum (%)
Millennium Bond Two year term - minimum £2,000			
Annual Income/Growth	7.20	7.20	5.76
Monthly Income	6.95	6.95	5.56
TESSA Reserve Tax Free Savings - No Minimum Balance	7.25	7.45	N/A
Crown Reserve 3 Month Notice - Interest paid quarterly			
£250,000 +	6.85	7.03	5.48
£100,000 - £249,999	6.70	6.87	5.36
£50,000 - £99,999	6.40	6.56	5.12
Below £50,000, gross rates are the same as Diamond Reserve			
Diamond Reserve 1 Month Notice - Interest paid monthly			
£100,000 +	6.55	6.75	5.24
£50,000 - £99,999	6.25	6.43	5.00
£25,000 - £49,999	5.50	5.64	4.40
£10,000 - £24,999	5.00	5.12	4.00
£2,000 - £9,999	4.45	4.54	3.56
Reward Reserve Instant Access - basic interest paid quarterly			
£10,000 +	6.35	6.43	5.08
£2,000 - £9,999	6.10	6.17	4.88
Premium Reserve Instant Access - interest paid quarterly			
£50,000 +	5.05	5.15	4.04
£25,000 - £49,999	4.95	5.04	3.96
£10,000 - £24,999	4.60	4.68	3.68
£2,000 - £9,999	4.35	4.42	3.48
First Reserve Instant Access - interest paid quarterly			
£1,000 +	3.85	3.91	3.08
£500 - £999	3.60	3.65	2.88
£250 - £499	2.50	2.52	2.00
£100 - £249	2.35	2.37	1.88
£1 - £99	2.25	2.27	1.80

The rates for all other personal savings accounts remain unchanged. Where appropriate, lower rates for Currents (20%) will be deducted at source from interest credited or paid (which may be restricted by resident non-taxpayers). Otherwise (for example, subject to the required registration form), interest will be paid gross. The Gross Rate is the rate paid before deducting income tax. The Net Rate is the rate paid after the deduction of lower rate income tax, currently at 20%. The gross rate and the gross CAR for the Reward Reserve account include quarterly interest rewards of 1.50% gross per annum and an annual interest reward of 0.50% gross per annum. Quarterly rewards are payable provided the account balance does not fall below £2,000 and no more than one withdrawal is made in any quarter. Annual rewards are payable provided the account remains in credit and no more than three withdrawals are made in any year. Should you close your account during a quarterly or annual period, you will not receive any quarterly or annual reward for that period. For details of other interest rates please ask at your local branch. All rates are subject to variation.

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Earl of the Dome



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

A few cynics in Brussels have come to the view that Bernie Ecclestone may have been bluffing when he warned that, without tobacco sponsorship, Formula One and its attendant industries would flee the country, leaving desolation in their wake.

But Tony Blair was convinced by the eloquent Mr Ecclestone. A hefty cheque did not cloud his vision at all, even if it has now had to be returned. The problem is simply one of perception. Mr Ecclestone gave generously to Labour: he received a reprieve for Formula One. The two events are unconnected, but the juxtaposition looks bad, and appearances count, as new Labour has been reminded.

So I am intrigued by word that reaches me from Greenwich, where the struts of the Millennium Dome are now reaching skywards. It seems that Robert Earl, the millionaire restaurateur who so kindly handed Labour the cash to repay Mr Ecclestone, may want to open one of his establishments within the Dome. Assuming that there is to be some competition for catering sites in what is aiming to be a huge tourist attraction, a perception problem could be looming for Mr Earl, proprietor of the Planet Hollywood chain.

His rivals in the restaurant business, and there are many, would surely waste no time in pointing out that he had made his £1 million donation to the Labour Party and then been ushered into the Dome. When potentially valu-

able contracts are at stake, business tacticians do not always feel obliged to restrict themselves to blows above the belt.

To Mr Earl, £1 million is pocket money. If he wanted to buy influence, he could certainly afford to be more generous, since his empire is now estimated to be worth about £800 million. But if he does have thoughts of opening up at the Dome, he will face a tricky public relations problem.

Planet Hollywood, anyhow, may not be the most appropriate format for the Millennium Dome, given its roots in American cinema rather than British history.

He broke into the catering business with a Beefeater, bar-queuing hall. Perhaps a variant on that would be more suited to the Dome than a US-style burger café, although it might fall foul of the Cool Britannia mood.

For the time being, most of us remain entirely in the dark as to what will eventually go inside the Dome. The new exhibition that has just opened in Greenwich attempts to give a flavour of the project without giving any indications as to what delights will eventually be on offer. But Mr Earl should know a little more, since he has already been offer-

ing advice to Peter Mandelson on his pet project.

It would be a shame if his donation were to preclude him from being able to extend his early enthusiasm into taking part in the fun and games that will eventually be on offer. But all those who make political donations will now be in danger of being precluded from situations where they might appear even tangentially to have bought a place at the table.

Getting out of the coal hole

The Government is busy firefighting over coal, after being caught unawares at the depth of feeling stirred by the prospect of thousands of job losses and the end of the industry.

It is now doing what it should have done several months ago and shaping some sort of energy

policy which provides both a role for coal and an idea of its future.

It is unbelievable that Labour should have let the issue explode in the way in which it has. The manner in which it has tried to fight the criticism has also been deeply cynical. The Department of Trade and Industry's spin sheet for ministers advised them to blame the crisis on the Tories. It said: "The least painful press option is to present, sympathetically, the facts of the real position that this Government has inherited. This has the great advantage of being true."

But as the Government, Labour has the ability to alter the circumstances it has inherited. We have had the ridiculous situation of John Birt blaming the Conservatives for approving too many gas-fired power stations, while then happily approving them himself.

What emerges from the No 10 inspired initiative to provide the foundations for a coal industry

over the medium term should bring some sensibility to energy and should help to create a diverse, sustainable and secure mix that Mr Birt has always advanced but has done nothing to achieve.

It is not surprising that fury has greeted the crisis in coal. It has not just stemmed from the emotive prospect of miners losing their jobs under a Labour Government. It has arisen because Labour had promised a more considered approach to the very long-term issue of energy than simply throwing up its hands and saying we are in a free market now. Coal is a resource the UK is well blessed with. But once closed, mines are not easily reopened. In addition to the huge employment consequences, it is folly to leave the UK's energy needs to the whim of a market which is leading us to heavy dependence on imported gas.

The DTI had thought it could manage the controversy with its spin sheet of pat comments. It comprehensively failed. If the Energy Minister had mustered more convincing performances it may not have failed in such an embarrassing manner. If mutterings in the higher Labour echelons prove prophetic, Mr Birt may next year join thousands of miners next year—in looking for a new job.

Richemont makes fashion statement

It is reassuring to know that while financial chaos hits the Far East, Cartier and Chloé retain their appeal. Richemont is providing ample demonstration of its faith in the continuance of demand for luxury brands by bidding so generously for the minority in Vendôme.

The South African company only ever parted with a minority of shares in this adjunct to its tobacco business. Now it wants the lot and perhaps it is right in its view that these international names can best be nurtured in the safety of privacy. Outside shareholders have a nasty habit of losing faith in a brand when it temporarily stumbles. But it is puzzling why

Richemont should have come to this conclusion now, having clearly felt differently just four years ago when it floated the business. As the figures it produced earlier this week showed, the company is hardly suffering from its status. Stella McCartney, the Beatles daughter, is doing wonders with the Chloé label that had rather languished in the last years of Karl Lagerfeld's reign and profits were up by almost a third.

The Dunhill brand is looking a little jaded, according to some style-conscious critics, but the Vendôme stable boasts a host of other up-market names that seem destined to survive well into the next century. On that basis, it is tempting to assume that Richemont believes that there are good times ahead and that the price that looks superficially generous is nothing of the kind.

Netted

FEARS that the Internet is lawless have again been denied. BT, Marks & Spencer, Ladbrokes, Sainsbury and Virgin have together won a high court injunction against two firms that set up a cottage industry registering domain names for websites and e-mail using famous names and then tried to sell them to the offended parties. Instead, they must hand them over free. Protecting copyrights may be harder, but will surely come.

Hornby on fast track to parents

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHARES in Hornby, the model railway group, rose 2½p to 17½p despite a fall in half-year profits from £1.1 million to £973,000 on sales down from £13 million to £11 million in the first half.

The fall was put down to the discontinuation of radio-controlled and toy products. Like for like, Hornby says that the pre-tax profit on its core products is ahead of last year.

Debits fell, reducing the interest charge from £4.5 million to £1.7 million in the six months to September 30. An unchanged interim dividend of 2.0p a share is to be paid.

Hornby says that it is has shifted the focus of its marketing to target the adult enthusiast, rather than children. Hornby is applying a similar philosophy to its other main product, Scalextric racing car games.

Peter Newey, chairman, said: "How do you define a toy? In the main they are bought by mature men, not by children. They go to collectors or enthusiasts who put them into model layouts."

"Most of our sets are bought by men for their sons in anticipation of playing with them themselves, I am sure."

The most popular train model is the Inter-City 125, but Hornby has updated its range to include the liveries of newcomers such as Virgin and GNER.

Favourites such as the Flying Scotsman are joined by miniature versions of their modern equivalents such as the Eurostar and even the suburban commuter Networker in service on the Chiltern Line.

The switch of emphasis away from the traditional toy market helped the group to offset the effects of the strong pound, which have hit exports of Scalextric, and its decision to drop production of radio-controlled toys.

Richemont to spend £1bn buying Vendôme shares

By GEORGE SIVELL

RICHEMONT, the Swiss company that owns 70 per cent of Vendôme, the luxury goods group that supplies the Cartier, Chloé and Purdy brands, plans to buy the shares that it does not own for 495p each. Vendôme shares soared from 393½p to 472½p in response (Commentary, see this page).

Vendôme was floated on the stock market at about 300p in 1993 after a reconstruction of the tobacco and luxury goods business of Rothmans, Dunhill and Richemont. The 30 per cent minority is held largely by institutions.

The £1.036 billion buyback values the whole of Vendôme at £3.45 billion. It remains subject to approval by the other shareholders and the Vendôme board. Richemont said that a financing commitment for the full amount of the cash consideration had been provided by Deutsche Bank.

Richemont added, however, that it might decide not to proceed with the proposals in the event of any further collapse in the world markets that could have a "material adverse impact" on the business of Vendôme. However, Richemont will still pay Vendôme shareholders the proposed interim dividend of 3.7p a share.

Vendôme luxury goods brands include Cartier, Alfred Dunhill, Montblanc, Piaget, Baume & Mercier, Vacheron, Constantin, Lancel and Chloé.



Stella McCartney, chief designer at Chloé, one of the brands supplied by Richemont

It is likely that the Vendôme board will appoint a committee of independent directors to consider Richemont's proposals and advise minority holders, Richemont said. Richemont's said that it was taking Vendôme private because it now believed that it was finally strong enough to

finance further investment in the company. Richemont's offer of 495p per share unit represents a premium of 25.8 per cent of the closing price of Vendôme on November 27 and a multiple of 18.7 times Vendôme's earnings for the year to March 31.

In 1993 Richemont, headed

by Johann Rupert, a South African, restructured its holdings and set up the current companies. In addition to Vendôme, Richemont has a two thirds interest in Rothmans International, the tobacco company, and a 15 per cent interest in Canal Plus, the pay-television group.

Crest cost exchange £1m income

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE London Stock Exchange's transfer of settlement from Talisman to Crest cost it £1 million in income, interim results reveal.

In the six months to September 30 the exchange earned £70.3 million, compared with £71.3 million for the same period last year.

However, the transition to Crest, which became fully operational in April, cut the exchange's costs by £19.3 million to £46.3 million. This was achieved mainly by reducing the number of staff by 200 to 550. After tax and interest, £18.3 million has been transferred to reserves.

A spokesman would not comment on whether the exchange was considering a rebate to members. In May it returned £10 million to City companies.

It has, however, yet to finish two major projects in preparation for the single currency and solving the millennium problem facing computer systems.

It has been a busy six months for the exchange. It has attracted listings from 63 new UK companies and 24 overseas firms and 24 companies joined the Alternative Investment Market.

Reuters adds worldwide sports Web

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

REUTERS, the international news and information group, kicks off on Monday with its own free sports Web site giving up-to-the minute sports coverage from around the world.

Reuters believes that its SportsWeb will be the first truly international sports Web site monitoring and reporting on nearly 60 sports worldwide. "What we have in text and pictures is a sports file which is very international and quite deep," says Pat McCarty, its editor.

The venture is a collaboration between Reuters and Digital Equipment Corporation, which is responsible for the design, installation and management of the Web site.

The organisation will benefit from the advertising and merchandising opportunities that arise. There are also plans to use the site to sell tickets for sports events.

Julie Holland, managing director of Reuters UK and Ireland, said: "We know everyone is obsessed with sport." She views SportsWeb as very much a business venture and one that grows naturally out of the group's existing news and information activities. Reuters

has a dedicated team of 15 sports journalists and three support staff based in London, as well as four full-time specialists in New York, three in Paris and one each in Bonn and Sydney.

Reuters does not see itself facing any direct Web competition. PA, the national news agency, and information group, has an extensive sports Web site but it is non-commercial and designed mainly to be a "shop window" for its other Internet services.

Both ESPN, the satellite sports channel, and CBS, the US network group, have sport Web sites but both are primarily aimed at the North American market.

Initially the coverage in SportsWeb will be in English, but sections providing local perspective in other languages will be added next year.

Reuters said yesterday that the 1998 highlights of SportsWeb would include everything from this winter's England-West Indies cricket tests to the World Cup and Lennox Lewis's attempt to become the undisputed world heavyweight champion.

The Reuters site is found at www.sportsweb.com.

BKG price reaches new low

By PAUL DURMAN

SHARES in BKG Resources, the Kazakhstan mining company formerly known as Bakyrchik Gold, slid to a low of 15p yesterday.

BKG has surrendered most of its interest in the Bakyrchik mine as part of a rescue package agreed with Indochina Goldfields, the Canadian company that is its biggest shareholder and its joint venture partner in Kazakhstan.

The results for the six months to September 30 show BKG, which is based in

London, with losses of \$6.7 million (£4 million), up from \$6.2 million, and it has the resources for only modest geological investigations until the end of next year. It is also dependent on Indochina to fund its share of the initial costs of the Bakyrchik mine.

KPMG, BKG's auditor, gave a warning of the "significance" of the uncertainty arising from this dependence on Indochina and said the figures assumed the company would remain a going concern.

Roger Harris, BKG's managing director, said there were no plans to raise fresh capital.

At 15p, down 4½p yesterday, the AIM-quoted shares are a small fraction of last year's peak value of nearly 500p.

BKG retains only a 20 per cent interest in the Kazakh mine, down from 85 per cent previously. This has caused it to make a \$76.5 million provision against the value of its main asset, reducing the value of its investments to just \$12.5 million (\$87.8 million).

Cox assets hit by market falls

STOCK market volatility has wiped £3 million off the value of Cox Insurance Holdings' net assets in two months, the company said yesterday (Marianne Curphey writes).

The loss would have been £2 million higher but for a hedge taken out around the time the markets peaked in early October.

Cox, a corporate investor at Lloyd's of London, said pre-tax profit rose to £7.3 million (£4 million) for the half year to September 30. The interim dividend is 0.8p (0.7p) a share.

IMF rescue promises to end system of giant conglomerates

South Korea's chaebol face upheaval

By GEORGE SIVELL

THE terms of the IMF rescue for South Korea place a question mark over the future of the chaebol, the giant conglomerates that control the South Korean economy. Samsung, Hyundai, LG and Daewoo are responsible for 80 per cent of GDP.

While the companies are reluctant to comment on the cutting back of overseas expansion plans they will find raising the money at home much harder. Yields on South Korean corporate bonds soared to 15.85 per cent this week and the stock market plunged 10 per cent in one day.

International investors are beginning to shun South Korean paper because of the South-East Asian turmoil. Yesterday LG Semicon, part of the LG chaebol, announced an indefinite postponement of a global deposit receipt issue.

None of the big chaebol, apart from

Samsung Electronics, has been able to raise capital in the global equity market this year, a far cry from a year ago when South Korean paper was the darling of foreign investors. Economists are now coming to realise that the huge growth of the chaebol, financed by huge debts, lies behind the plea to the IMF for assistance.

Samsung stunned the business community this week with a 30 per cent cut in investment next year and its rivals are expected to follow suit. Hallya said that it was retrenching half its 6,000 workforce at its shipbuilding unit by the year-end.

Kim Sang Wook, a spokesman for Hyundai, said: "We have our back to the wall." Many Hyundai subsidiaries are pushing for heavy restructuring, "something they haven't done for a long time," he said.

Koo Bon Moo, the LG chairman, is urging his lieutenants to focus on "selection and concentration" as the

group's future strategy. LG, South Korea's third biggest conglomerate, is consolidating business interests to focus on profits rather than expansion. Daewoo is slowing a global expansion effort that has made it a household name in East Europe, Central Asia and other emerging markets, quite apart from its offer of free air-ride door servicing of cars sold in Britain.

The Federation of Korean Industries, a lobbying organisation of the largest conglomerates, called on the Government for "extreme" rescue measures for companies and financial institutions. Seven of the top 30 conglomerates have gone bankrupt or nearly so, alongside numerous failures of smaller companies.

Analysts said that the heavy dose of austerity expected from an IMF programme could slow growth below 3 per cent next year, from this year's expected 6 per cent, putting more pressure on the chaebol to cut back.

Geoff Lewis, a Hong Kong based economist at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, said: "There is a clear need for Korea to move away from the chaebol. The system is clearly not appropriate to the 1990s with technology improving and other countries catching up."

Mr Lewis added: "The IMF has been drawn into some pretty fundamental restructuring plans, which are a long way removed from its main sphere of expertise... to what extent the IMF will be dictating the whole process of industrial reform remains to be seen."

After weeks of denials, South Korea finally sought help from the IMF on November 21 as reports of declining foreign exchange reserves ricocheted through Asian markets. So far, the IMF has said South Korea would require a standby credit facility of \$20 billion (£11.97 billion), but analysts said the extent of the external debt problem, estimated at \$151 billion, could mean much more than that was required.

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Since its ill-fated demerger from Thorn 15 months ago, EMI Group has set only two records during its solo career on the FTSE 100. Over the past 12 months, its shares have plunged faster than any blue-chip peers. Secondly, it whipped its rivals on the executive pay front by doling out £7.15 million to Jim Fife, head of its US records division, making him the highest-paid director of any FTSE company.

Now it seems set for a third record — pulling off the most value-shedding demerger in corporate history. And although the two companies have now lost £3.81 billion of market value between them, Sir Colin Southgate — who masterminded the split — still seems quite relaxed. "I'm not falling apart," he said last week, two days after giving warning that EMI is facing sluggish world music markets. "I would like the market to be better, but I think we manage in the market as well as anybody. What more can I do?"

He is fond of reminding that EMI is not just a record company, its a "national treasure". Its shares may have plunged 42 per cent against a bull market in the past year, but with titles that span the Beatles to the Spice Girls, how wrong can one company really go? "We are still the third-largest music company in the world," he says. "We are the number one music retailer in the world. We have the best return on capital. Name me the next British company that can say that."

Cool operator dancing to a different economic beat

He blames exceptional forces for hampering the share prices of both companies since the demerger. Together with the £600 million both Thorn and EMI have made in buy-backs, he says, things just ain't that bad. Shares in EMI, his theory goes, were beset by takeover speculation from the first.

"I've watched the takeover premium come out of the share price over the year," Sir Colin said. "I also watched the two years up to demerger when the shares got to a heady £18. I should have sold then — that would have gone down really well in the City. And bought at £10 — that would have lived them up."

Thorn and EMI are worth £4.18 billion against £7.99 billion just after the August demerger. To many shareholders, this is inescapably damning — a viewpoint made clear at both companies' annual meetings. But Sir Colin ranks the demerger as a success, on the grounds that shareholders who wanted a "bog standard rental business" are no longer involved in the "hype of the rock and roll business".

Together, the two companies' combined market cap amounts to where

IN THE HOT SEAT

C/SOUTHGATE

Non-executive directorships: Bank of England, Terrence Chapman Group, Whitehead Mann Group, Born Surrey, 1988, Attended City of London School. Trained as actuary but quit before qualifying to join ICL. Set up Software Science, which was sold to EMI in 1982. Chief executive in 1987.

Thorn EMI was three years ago — which he admits is far from ideal. "But we've given very good value to the shareholders since we decided on the demerger in the summer of 1994. They should not be unhappy about it." He went on: "Now, the rationale

is popping into people's heads about shareholder value, but what does it mean? It seems the only way I can keep up this shareholder value is to keep putting out rumours that we're just about to be taken over."

This casual attitude, which has won him so many friends in the music industry, is much less appreciated in the City. Fund managers tearing their hair out over EMI's dismal share performance take cold comfort from reminders that the company is a "national treasure".

The recurring question is exactly what value Sir Colin has added to Thorn EMI, either together or apart, after having enjoyed a salary that, in the demerger year, is said to have totalled £8 million. Sir Colin claims to be bashful about his own impact, but does make one assertion: "All I can say is that I don't think EMI would exist if I had not come. What about that? I think it would have been sold around 1985 — somebody would have taken us over."

Whether this is so or not, a growing number of City analysts fear he is too enchanted with the glitzy life of a pop king to think about earnings growth. "We get the impression that he doesn't

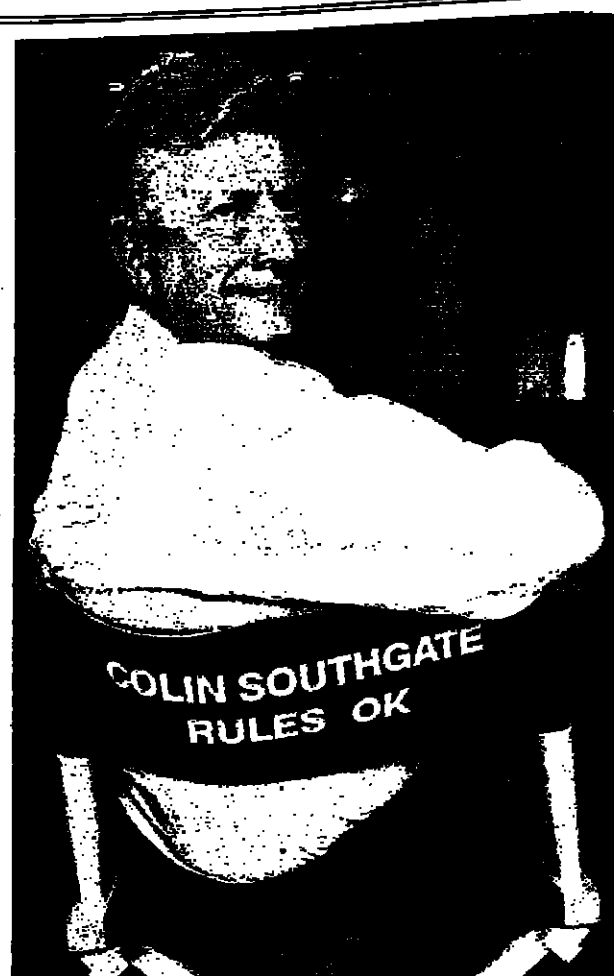
really care what happens to the business," said one. "He's always so aloof, and this is not encouraging." No one is calling for his head, although some say his departure would "not be met with unmitigated grief by the shareholders".

Even if the worst should happen, Sir Colin is not short of a Plan B. Last week he was named one of the roving ambassadors from business whom the Government wishes to parade to promote Britain's wider commercial interests. And although he has promised another four years at EMI, he does not deny suggestions that he is gunning for the chairmanship of Channel Four.

Whatever the turbulence of the past year, Sir Colin seems to consider his time at EMI as a mission accomplished. Indeed, shareholders who bought when he took the helm in July 1985 cannot deny that they are much better off — to the tune of some £3.2 billion, and that a large part of the credit lies with the chief executive.

Those unfortunate enough to pile in at the demerger find Sir Colin's lack of urgency maddening, and strange, at a time when Thorn's management is willing to sell anything they can to hike the shares up. But he remains confident that natural market forces will lift the company when the global demand for music recovers. Until then, EMI will sit and wait.

FRASER NELSON



Sir Colin Southgate: a relaxed view of the future

German entrepreneur to import 'gentlemen's clubs' to London

Gillian Upton finds out how Far Eastern experience refined a British idea

Last night Dieter R. Klostermann, chairman and chief executive of CCA Holdings, arrived in London from his Hong Kong headquarters to review documentation for four new purchases across Europe. It is widely expected that an announcement of at least one will be made next week.

Klostermann's claim to fame is as exporter of the classic British gentlemen's club to the burgeoning economies of Asia in the Eighties. He improved on them and is now set to re-import them by expanding his presence in the UK and continental Europe. Two of the purchases are in greater London, another in Frankfurt, and the last in Berlin in the historic Unter den Linden.

"Things are very hot," said Michael Longshaw, CCA's regional manager UK. "He doesn't come over when it's wet and horrible. It means an announcement is fairly imminent."

The CCA style of private club can be seen in the transformation of the Gresham Club in the Square Mile in 1994. The London Capital Club has more than 1,000 members drawn from the worlds of banking, law, insurance and corporate finance. Members are effusive about the high standard of food, networking opportunities and female membership.

"I did think the City could do with a new Rialto. The City has been a bit bereft of good facilities and he had all the right notions," said Sir Peter Parker, the Capital Club's honorary chairman.

Two years later Klostermann launched his second European venture when he took over Brocklet Hall, the former ancestral home in Hertfordshire of Lord Brocklet, the disgraced aristocrat. He has been operating it as an out-of-town conference centre, golf and country club. Its golf club is chaired by Lord MacLaurin, the former chairman of Tesco.

Next week's announcement will be the first of Klostermann's planned £100 million



CCA hopes to repeat its success with Brocklet Hall, which is now a golf and country club and conference centre

investments in the UK on more "Brocklets".

Luton Hoo was on the acquisition list, but its distance from London and the cost of conversion were too great.

The Good "Gaijin" (foreigner) Guide would undoubtedly list Klostermann as the most sought-after businessman in Asia. One associate described him recently as the Chinese equivalent of a Tai-pan, such is his influence. Such lofty status explains why his invitation for June's handover ceremony of Hong Kong came from the Chinese.

CCA runs the most prestigious private clubs across the Asia Pacific region. The list of members reads like a Who's Who of Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, Thai, Indonesian, Singaporean, Vietnamese and Filipino blue chip concerns. It includes leading players in Beijing's power structure, while in Jakarta two of his partners are the country's two leading business groups. And in Tokyo members of the imperial family patronise his facilities.

There are more than 30 clubs, half are company owned, and some 80,000 members are spread across 14 Asian economies.

Based in Hong Kong, CCA

generates annual revenues of £180 million and has no transnational rivals.

Klostermann moves in the right circles. Doors can be opened for him anywhere in the world. "I've made a lot of friends and if we need help we have easy access, but we use it in a proper manner."

He is devoid of the flamboyancy often associated with high-flyers. Quietly spoken, unassuming and conservatively dressed, he has all but lost his German accent, which has softened appreciably after 30 years of living in the Far East. "He has a quite Rolls-Royce purr," is how Sir Peter Parker describes him. "He was born in Bremen, and it may have been the Hanseatic tradition of having more contact with the outside world that helped to turn this 53-year-old into one of the new breed of transnational businessmen. He has worked in Frankfurt, Paris, New York and Sydney.

He credits himself with a "bit of oriental mentality" after so long in Asia.

His career began in hotels. He held senior management positions with big-name players such as Hilton Hotels Corporation, Holiday Inns, Oberoi Hotels, and Hilton International. He wanted to start his own

business so he moved swiftly into hotel development working on several international projects. "It's important to understand the economics of development, the cost of investment, how to raise funds for a project and how to deal with investors," he explains.

The experience obviously honed his diplomatic management style as "the velvet approach".

His business mentor was Ewell Pope. "He had tremendous perseverance. You must never give up. People in Asia admire it," says Klostermann. It took him years to negotiate

his first project in Japan, but he hung in there, remembering Pope's advice.

CCA became the first foreign company to own and operate a private international business club in Japan with the opening of the Century Club in Osaka in 1983.

The company flagship in Asia, the City Club of Tokyo, followed three years later, opened by Prince and Princess Mikasa, just as the recession started.

"The early part was not easy," he admits, "you have to go through a learning curve." His tenacity, however, has paid off. "I didn't expect the company to grow so rapidly. Had we been in one market we would have grown faster still, but Japan, China and Indonesia, for example, have different cultures, different eating habits and ways of doing business."

He believes that his good fortune would not have happened in Europe. "Asia then was similar in the old days to California. I was in the right place at the right time," he says with self-effacement.

Witnessing the rising affluence across Asia, he tapped into it by founding the CCA Group in 1980 to both develop and operate places where the Asian nouveau riche could spend

their new-found wealth. "We started out with the simple idea of enhancing lifestyles," he says.

Openings followed the flow of foreign investment. Vietnam has been the most difficult of all hidden investments. "It has much more red tape than China and it changes laws at short notice," he says.

CCA has recently signed a joint venture contract with one of Klostermann's former employers, Oberoi, the Indian luxury hotel owner, to develop clubs throughout India, starting with Bangalore and Delhi. The concept of a private club is not a new idea in either Europe or North America, but is novel in Asia except in Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

"Existing clubs were member-run, but not for profit," he says. "They were run by part-time committees with no financial accountabilities. People concentrate too much on the crystalware. That is important, but I wanted to apply professional management."

His hotel base formula of high standards and excellent food and beverage worked, although there is nothing formulaic about the premises. Each is designed to fit the local culture and community (which does not really explain the Bankers' Club in Taipei resembling the inside of an English stately home), and are driven in no small part by the senior members of the local business community who make up a board of advisers. It is they who have the final say on who passes muster.

The club is one of five types: city, city-athletic, golf and country club, family recreational and an entirely new category of small luxury club resorts. They vary from the City Club of Tokyo to the Imperial Country Club in Jakarta and the 36-hole Vietnam Golf and Country Club in Ho Chi Minh City.

Eight clubs are under development, including one in Moscow. Klostermann may take CCA International, the management company, public, and is toying with the idea of going into language and cookery schools and property development in China.

Other than that he is concentrating on his core business, eagerly looking for resorts. "It's a natural extension of our business. We cater to them weekdays in city clubs, weekends at golf and country clubs and now holidays. We want to be with you all the time."

MARTIN WALLER

Transforming Japan will test the nerve of ruling party

Carl Mortished in Tokyo finds a painful economic shift under way

On Thursday, a stockbroker jumped to his death from an office building in Osaka. He was employed by an affiliate of Yamaichi, the biggest corporate failure in Japanese history, sending out shockwaves. No one knows why Seichi Tanigashira, the 40-year-old deputy section head at Taiheiyu Securities, committed suicide but the press says he was depressed over the Yamaichi failure.

On the same day, the former chairman of Yamaichi publicly admitted that 265 billion yen (£12 billion) in losses were concealed in a web of off-balance-sheet transactions. Known as *tobashi* trading, deficits on client accounts prior to the year end were transferred to separate companies to avoid a loss.

The admission was a very public humiliation for Tsugio Yukihira, who said that the firm had been trying to trade out of its problems. But more interesting has been public reaction. Most Japanese are less shocked by the attempt at concealment than by the fact that the firm was allowed to go under. Lawmakers in Japan, including members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, are reported to have criticised the Ministry of Finance for not being aware of Yamaichi's troubles or, if they were, for not having concealed them.

There is no obvious panic other than the relentless slide in the Nikkei index but the calm conceals a typhoon blowing through this wealthy and ordered society. What is happening is the unravelling of Japan Inc, the complex ties that ensure the weak are carried by the strong.

At a low level it means that staff are kept on long after their jobs or skills have become redundant. At the corporate level it is best exemplified by the so-called "conveyor system" where the strongest banks are expected to bail out the weak. That still seemed to be in operation in April when Nippon Credit was recapitalised but recent events suggest the Finance Ministry is thinking the unthinkable. In a month, four financial institutions have been cut loose from the great financial conveyor.

Banking analysts in Tokyo expect more of the leaking boats to be sacrificed to the forces of capitalism. James McGinnis, banking analyst at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, reckons 30 per cent of the sector could go in failures or takeovers. "Propping up the weak is like trying to save a drowning man. If you don't catch him right, he'll drag you down," he said.

Japan's troubles stem in part from the 1970s when the government pump-primed the economy with public works. Although Japan has been left with an infrastructure that is

the envy of the world, it has also accumulated huge bad debts, some would say from pork-barrel projects now yielding little or no return. The Japanese saved huge sums while they restored prosperity after the war and banks found an easy source of cheap capital to lend, many would say indiscriminately, to industrial companies. With cheap loans and a pressing need to create jobs, Japan Inc went for growth at the expense of everything else.

Ken Okamura, equity strategist at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, reckons that corporate behaviour in the late 1980s had much to do with the need to find good jobs for the baby-boomers, who were turning 40 and demanding promotions.

Japan's birth rate is now running at well below replacement rate and the lack of new bodies to join the ranks of the salarymen is causing a major headache. As state pension provision is inadequate and many companies, already suffering from weak profitability, are funding pension schemes from current income. The demographics point to a severe squeeze on public and private finances, evidenced by the extraordinary savings ration. Meanwhile

economic growth is not filling the gap and the economy stagnates.

The Japanese Government faces an almost impossible task, restructuring an economy designed for growth rates of 5 to 6 per cent but now registering nil. Burdened with bad debts, it needs to raise consumption levels but the message to the public is that the future is bleak. Walk down Ginza, the shopping street that acts as a barometer of consumer confidence and there is a distinct lack of bustle.

When Yamaichi staff cried as they explained the collapse to appalled customers more than shame caused their tears — they feared for their own jobs. The concern is well justified: their customers who were trying to cash in money market accounts will not spend the proceeds but put the money under the mattress with the nagging worry that they could face the axe.

In a real sense, Japan is making the painful transition from a socialist economy to one where the weak can sometimes go to the wall. The agonising job facing nervous officials in the Ministry of Finance is how to sell this transition to the public.

Should the Government lose its nerve, the capital markets will turn their back on Japan and the huge cost of bailing out the creaking financial system could become prohibitive. If they forge ahead and permit a rash of bankruptcies, there must be a nagging worry that Japan's docile salarymen might just say "No".

Behind the calm, a typhoon blows in this ordered society

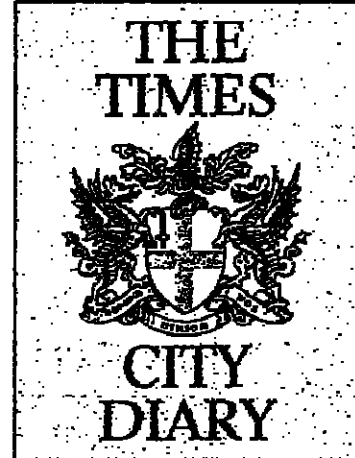
River view

GOOD news for anyone who has ever had to spend time in Dresdner Kleinwort Benson's rather ghastly foyer in Fenchurch Street, probably the least receptive of the City's reception areas. Kleinwort is taking over BZW's old gaff on the Thames, at Ebbsgate House, vacated when they were all shipped downriver to Canary Wharf and sold into Swiss slavery. Some 800 people from the global markets and finance teams are moving to Swan Lane by the end of next year, once the building has been fumigated and refurbished at a cost of £40 million. This will allow much of Fenchurch Street itself, where Kleinwort has been in residence since 1969, to be tarted up, including the glass-fronted penal holding tank at the front of the building. "Hopefully when they get around to doing the refurbishment, that's where they will start," says my

source. Indeed, get above about the tenth floor at Kleinwort and it is salubrious enough. Roux Brothers catering and all, but anything below that is positively Dickensian.

By then, they should have sorted out the computer glitches that have been plaguing Kleinwort's derivatives team. No one at the German-owned bank is saying anything, but someone who has had dealings with them says they have been tearing their hair out for a week.

● **VISCOUNT THURSO'S** Champagne health club has imported the latest keep-fit gizmos from California to its Piccadilly premises, much frequented by politicians and other opinion-formers. A pedal bike on which the chain goes the wrong way around — or something such, the details need not detain us — they are



known as spin-bikes. And have already been christened Mandies.

Screen stars

IF THOSE busy little computer programmers scurrying around the

dealing rooms are the new heavy hitters in the City, then I think I have spotted their successors. The place to be, one of the big computer software houses was telling me a while back, is computer law. The opportunities for profiting from others' misfortune are endless. Now one specialist has struck out on his own. Richard Kemp, 41, is leaving Carreets to set up Kemp & Co. Actually, it is currently Kemp and Only Three Others, but another specialist lawyer, Kenny Mullen from McGrigor Donald, the Scottish law firm, is joining shortly. Kemp is the only technology buff to have appeared in a survey of 40 top UK solicitors aged less than 40 a couple of years back, but I will try to hold this against him.

Patronage

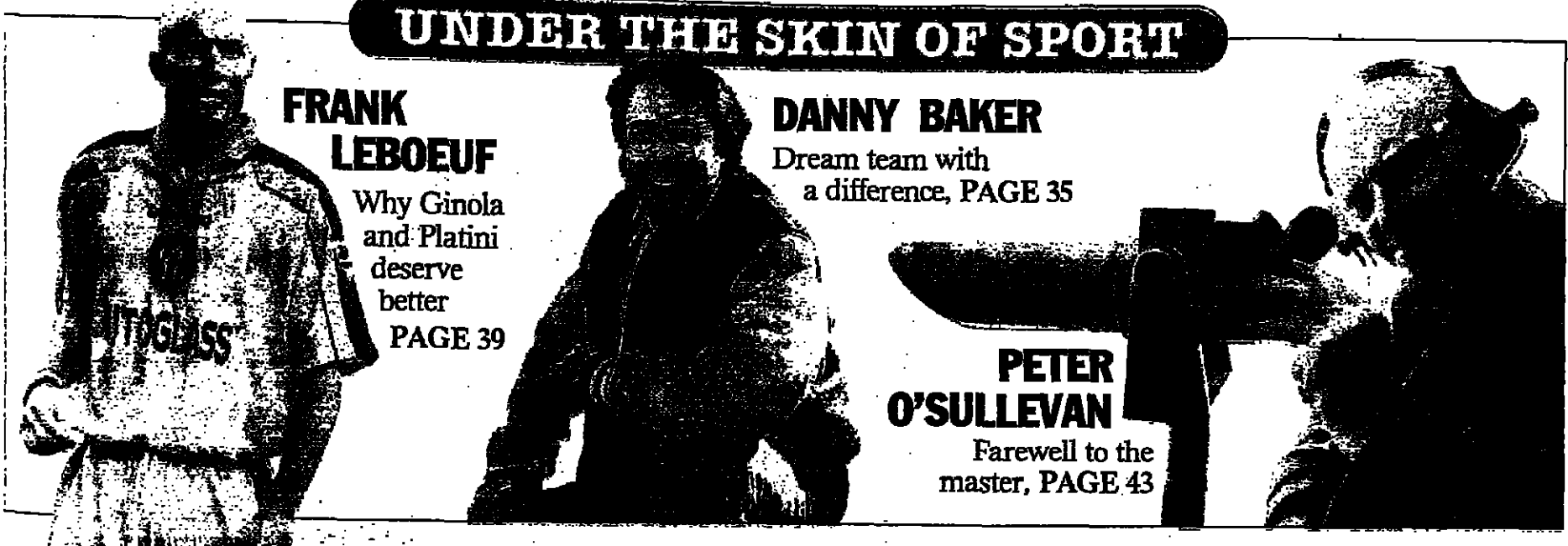
WE MIGHT find it a little odd, I think you would agree, if the Duke of Westminster were to be elected Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry with the blessing of

Tony Blair, with whom he had become chummy at the Ministry of Defence. But in France they have been doing things that for some time now, and on Monday Baron Ernest-Antoine de Laborde — to name but a few, as the late Ronnie Scott would have put it — will emerge as the favoured candidate to run the French bosses' organisation.

The Baron comes from one of the 200 aristocratic families that own France. He will receive the official backing of the executive committee of the CNPF, better known in France as the Patronat, ahead of the formal election on December 16. Then he will be opposed by a couple of terminal losers and emerge, Brezhnev-style, to replace Jean Gandois, who decided a few weeks back there were better ways of earning a living than arguing with the country's militant truck drivers. The Baron is on "tu-toi" terms with Lionel Jospin, the socialist Prime Minister, since their time together at the Quai d'Orsay.

MARTIN WALLER

UNDER THE SKIN OF SPORT



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THE TIMES SATURDAY SPORT

NOVEMBER 29 1997

CATT FACES BALD FACTS AT TWICKENHAM

England search for kicking habit

By ROB HUGHES
CHIEF SPORTS WRITER

WHEN Mike Catt stands behind the ball at Twickenham this afternoon, another capacity audience waiting to see if he has the nerve and accuracy to kick a penalty or a conversion straight, a well-rehearsed mantra should dominate his thoughts: "Flow through the ball".

He must not think back to the missed kicks against New Zealand last week. He must shut out the crowd, not see the doubt in the eyes of fellow men. Ignore the staring South Africans. He needs to be a man alone in England's biggest rugby ground, his mood should be tight, but not aggressive. And when he comes to the strike, he must forget about technique... just hit it. Flow through the ball.

If Catt has heard this once, he has heard it 100 times this week. "We haven't dwelt on failure," Dave Alred, the England kicking coach, said. "There isn't time. Catt lost the plot at Old Trafford. He was frustrated. He was disgusted because he's a proud man. But with the speed the games are coming, we have to concentrate on trusting the technique that is ingrained in him."

Alred, whose coaching expertise has soothed the likes of Rob Andrew and Neil Jenkins through troubled times, will know before the kick-off whether Catt is in the groove. In fact, he already thinks he knows because, at dinner last night, he had to make the final recommendation as to who should take the kicks between Catt and Matt Dawson. After hitting hundreds of balls in practice, the coach said that Catt, the No 1 England kicker, is ready.

"Kicking," Alred said, "is a lonely job. It has to be. I watched Andrew Mehrtens

THE TIMES TABLE

1	NEW ZEALAND	10-15
2	SCOTLAND	10-15
3	IRELAND	10-15
4	WALLES	10-15
5	ENGLAND	10-15
6	FRANCE	10-15
7	ARGENTINA	10-15
8	UNITED STATES	10-15
9	RUSSIA	10-15
10	ITALY	10-15

[New Zealand's exemplary kicker] last week. He was detached from things at the start; Mike couldn't hold on to that detachment, first because he's trying to do a job for England that he doesn't regularly do for Bath, second, because Lawrence Dallaglio, Jason Leonard and Martin Johnson brought the team up to an emotional peak that exceeded anything I've seen apart from the Lions tour to South Africa. It was so intense even the coaching staff found it difficult not to get carried into it.

For Catt, his competitiveness instilled in his early schooling in South Africa, the team spirit was unavoidable.

Today, if he is swayed by Alred, he will try to compartmentalise it — to run with the team, but shoot with singleness of mind. The coach has no illusions about the difficulty. Married with two children, Alred is attempting to conduct his own life on split levels. He has coached kickers in union and league in England, France and Australia yet is now also studying at Loughborough for a degree in the neurology of skill acquisition.

He has not filled the head of Catt with the science of the mind, but the process is there, in the subconscious. As the wind and rain relentlessly beat down on Bisham Abbey,

and later at a deserted Twickenham, Alred and Catt and Dawson went through their routine, again and again. "My degree course involves brain interference through alpha waves," Alred said, "but out in the field, though I'm searching for keys to the process, it is just about perfecting the tools they already have."

He admires Catt for even trying to be England's kicker, admires his "restart" kicks and his aptitude. "I'm trying to instil the example of Grant Fox [the legendary All Black] and Ollie Campbell, of Ireland. Those guys would kick three to five hundred balls a week, that's what gave them greatness."

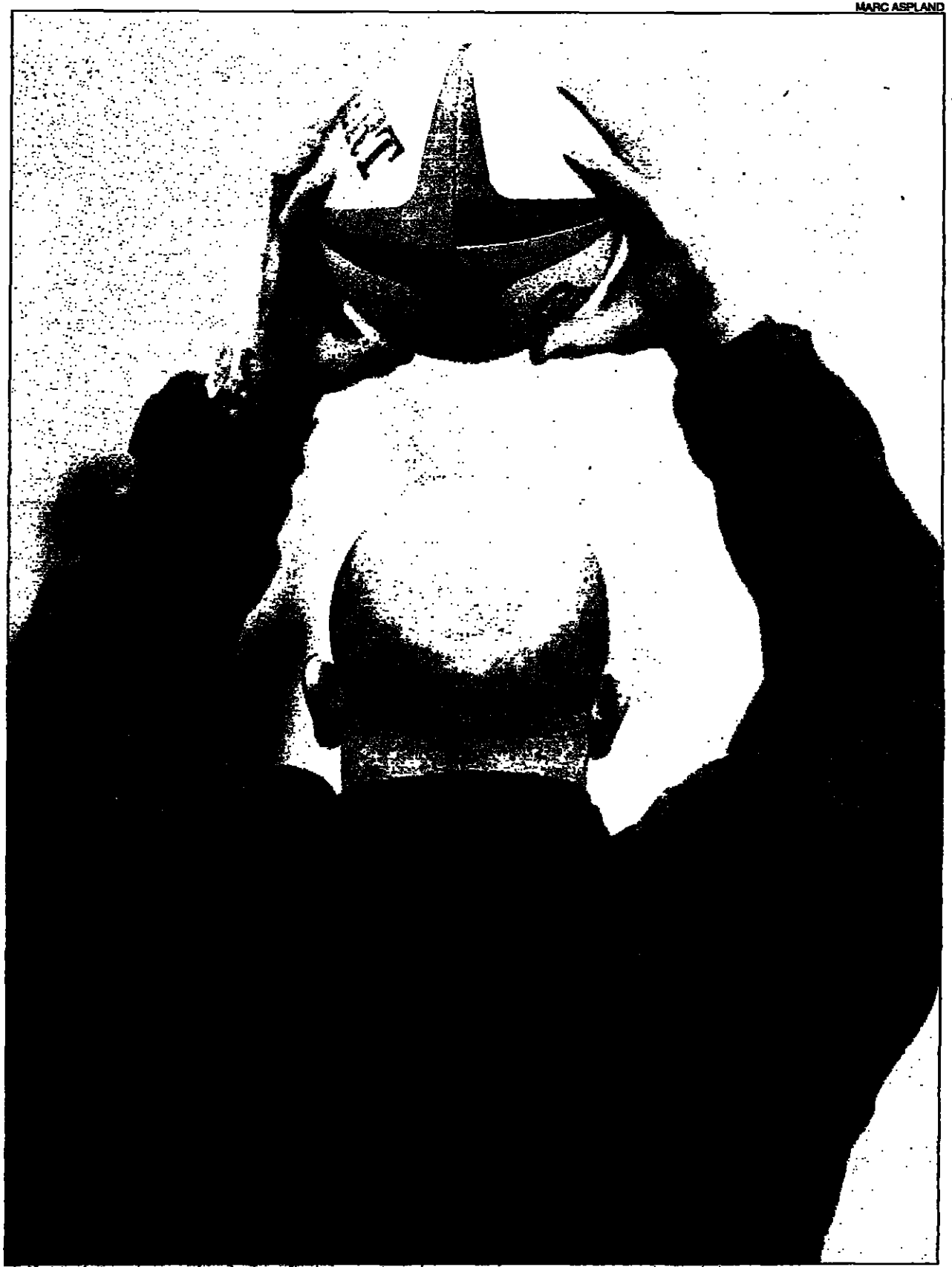
Long-term, Alred seeks a five-year plan to scour the country for young talent, to groom it through competitive coaching for the World Cup of 2003. "We must stop this trend of just buying ready-made kickers — great though Joel Stranksy and Michael Lynagh are — because sooner or later clubs have to start the process of helping kids to scrap for their place."

That, though, is in the future. England have to find quick solutions to the gap between the southern and northern hemispheres. "There is talent, innate talent, in England," Alred said, "more so than in Australia. But they've found ways to bring it through, we've trusted too long in notions of supremacy and just putting 15 talents on the field. The definition of lunacy is doing the same thing and expecting different results. Once you do what you've always done, you always get what you've got."

Today, at headquarters, the future is now. Don't think about it, flow through the ball.



Catt, left, and Dallaglio know just how important it is that England improve on their dismal kicking form of last week



James Dalton, the South Africa hooker, practises his lineout throw during his team's training session yesterday

Pop goes football in the court of boy-king Beckham

Way before the three worst singers in the world recorded *Three Lions*, football and pop music merged. Consider the job description: wear very silly trousers/shorts and sweat for an hour and a half in front of 30,000 screaming fans dressed top to toe in lovely, expensive merchandise. You could get England squad dolls way before you could get Spice Girl dolls. Those football dolls are brilliant — Peter Beardsley is next to my pond, with a little fishing rod in his hand; and in a serendipitous manufacturing error, my titchy Andy Cole came with a wonky plinth that ensures he falls over constantly.

Football managers even speak pop-star language — Joe Kinnear's mean in a recent programme that Wimbledon's "skill and ability" is

ignored by the critics, comes straight from the Lead Singer's Book of Whining Interviews, whilst Simon Fuller, the deposed Spice Girls' manager, would make a wonderful Liverpool manager. He already manages Steve McManaman; and he worked those girls hard.

So, as a music journalist, I didn't feel too hugely out of place at Wimbledon v Manchester United last Saturday, an ideal chance to work out if Karel Poborsky is using an Alice band or just lots of hairpins on that extraordinary 'do. Considering this barnet, and his performance this season, it also allowed me to check my theory that, in the euphoria of Euro 96, Manchester United had accidentally signed Carol Poborsky, a single mum from the Ukraine who'd made the international women's side. Unfortunately, he spent the entire match on the bench with his head up so I concentrated instead on Paul Scholes.

I was delighted to find that I recognised him immediately as the star of a birthday card sent to a friend last year. You may recall the picture — it's a rather blustery day. Paul has forgotten to put his pants on and, as he falls, a gust of wind reveals that he keeps a tiny bald mouse in his shorts. I think it's rather sweet that United chose a wee mouse as their mascot and take it with them on the pitch for good luck.

The oddest thing about Selhurst Park, however, was discovering that football matches are more orderly and decorous than the average spit 'n' sawdust rock 'n' roll hoo-down.

As the only time you see football fans on television is when they're either a) drunkenly hugging each other, with their faces painted to look like Flags of All Nations, or b) with blood running down their faces, a baton embedded at a jaunty angle in their heads and using plastic seats as particularly ineffective weapons, I was astonished to find myself in the calm of the family "No Swearing" enclosure.

No swearing! If this is for the benefit of the children, then staff at Selhurst Park are on a hiding to nothing — children are filthy little swear-weasels. Bands as Detroit-clean as Take That used to inspire banners that read "Robbie — point your erection in my direction". The children here were slightly

better trained, satisfying themselves with hoarse cries of "Oi, Beckham! Do you 'Wannabe' playing?" as he warmed up on the touchline. As pop stars have tiny little microphones in their heads, which trigger the "aloofness" and "deafness" functions on hearing their names bellowed, I was strangely delighted to see that Beckham responded with a boy-king beam and then a slightly twonkier little wave. The Gallaghers could learn a lot about the nobility of fame from Beckham.

There were lots of goals scored in the second half, but I was looking the other way. Some aspects of football were starting to obsess me. Maybe... maybe Poborsky uses a hairnet? Or might it just be mousse?

CAITLIN MORAN



The music journalist ready for a change of tune

hell I spilled the abbot

St Benedict

for it is written

Luke 4:8

A chilling tale of two beards

What ho, chaps — a feast! All week Chelsea supporters have been producing match programmes to show me the harsh words said about this column by their chairman Ken Bates. At first I thought Ken might be upset over the fact that I like to draw attention to the fact that, at a club notorious for fancy dandies, this Chelsea squad are setting new standards for foppish posturing.

Who can forget the squealing that arose when the club played in Norway in temperatures which, although chilly, were by many degrees warmer than those which munitions factory workers laboured under in two world wars?

Ken may not have been behind the Whining That Shamed British Football, but he must take credit for one of the more far-seeing schemes which was mooted back in the potty mid-Eighties, when identity cards and electronic tagging of fans seemed to be on the way. For it was Ken who fought long and hard for the introduction of electric fences into his ground, which might show the Stamford Bridge faithful just where their £10

admission fee ended and Celebrity Row began.

I remember one magnificent TV interview in which the Kentollah, white beard a-bristling, urged reporters to see that football fans were little better than organised cut-throats, and that five million volts of the sudden and juiciest were the only language these people might understand. I liked him then and I still do.

However, I think it is another reason — and a far more credible fear — which has led to his theatrical attack upon this still young space. That is Millwall's early exit from the FA Cup. It is a matter of public record that, most seasons, in one cup or another, Chelsea come a cropper to their neighbours from The Den.

If I had a pound for every time we've brought low the High Living Lads From Fashionable King's Road, then I would buy the club and have them cut out the panstick and highlights and concentrate on being a credible opposition who might, occasionally, punch their weight. Anyhow, this season Wimbledon and Bristol City have done Mr Bates's dirty work for him and with his ever-alert brain free of this potentially humiliating cloud, he now sets about harassing the Lions' No 1 supporter with impunity. I, of course, shall keep my own counsel.

Lastly, a third, comic, thought occurs. With the imminent release of the epic film *Titanic*, ordinary people might begin to notice that Ken Bates bears a startling resemblance to that fated ship's Captain, E. J. Smith. Aside from the usual crass connection made between the Unsinkable Lines and Roud Gullit's first XI, it will surely not escape historians' attention that the final movements of Captain Smith were never satisfactorily accounted for. Could they be one and the same person? They certainly seem to share an aversion to Arctic conditions.

In memoriam

ITV would like to thank all those who sent cards and messages of condolence following the tragic death of their football match, Barcelona v Newcastle, on Wednesday night.

The fixture died quietly, in its sleep, in front of 150 supporters, and is not thought to have suffered, unlike the millions of waiting *Coronation Street* fans. It will be buried without fuss in the scramble to broadcast any football, no matter how pointless. Ian St John is 106.

□ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday from 5.30pm.



Which is the Chelsea chairman and which the *Titanic* captain? Could they be related? Or possibly one and the same person?

One more lookalike

I know the column has used up its lookalike quotient, but if someone gets in with this one before next week I shall rage like Rumpelstiltskin. Here it is. Recent photographs of Christian Gross, the disastrous new managerial appointment under whom Spurs will be lucky to win a corner, must surely make the heart leap of any keen fan of the Pink Panther. For with his hooded eyes, pursing mouth and intense demeanour we are staring into the mirror reflection of Herbert Lion, much praised for his portrayal of Cornissoneur Dreyfuss — Inspector Clouseau's slow-burning boss. Soon we shall see the development of hilarious Dreyfuss-style facial ticks and unstable rambling in Herr Gross and the picture will be complete.

DANNY BAKER



Heads you lose

One of the most noble sporting pursuits in the world has been rocked by scandal. Researchers this week say they can find no evidence that Afghanistan tribesmen have ever played polo with a human head. Who are these busybodies who travel the globe smugly stripping away whatever shreds of exotica still remain on our daily less mysterious rock? What good can it do them to smash the wonder from little boys' imaginations and remove from pub conversation the one sporting topic that united both public and saloon?

The image of an Afghan horseman expertly navigating his speeding charger among the opposition, spotting a gap in their defence, and then, with one swift arc of is upturned rifle butt,

crisply firing home the sightless loaf of a former enemy from all of 30 yards is one I have carried with awe for nearly 30 years. Indeed, with a regularly recharged glass and a hushed company, I have often taken a little licence and claimed to have been actually present at such exhibitions while travelling from Herat to Kandahar. Now, thanks to the unwanted meddling of a quango of idiotic students who probably wouldn't know a severed human head from a Panama hat, I look a complete and utter fool.

If these pipe-sucking killjoys next come sniffing around the legend of Bert Trautmann and his famous broken neck, I'm afraid I may have to take matters into my own hands.

Fantasy game of one half

After a recent appeal to find what extra frisson is experienced by a gay man at a football match, I receive a tremendous letter from a Simon of Leigh-on-Sea. While the phrase "fantasy football" may have been done to death, it is perhaps the only one adequate for the intense mental visions Simon has built up during his time on the terraces. His letter arrives complete with Panini stickers of the players who make his pulse pick up the tempo, alongside a few words of the function they serve in the active erotic spring of Simon's libido. I am indebted to him for sharing his daydreams with me, and pass them along to you in turn.

1. John Spencer (Queens Park Rangers): With those tough, builder looks, I imagine him at fresco beside a half-built house among bits of wood and empty concrete sacks. No hard hats, but he is wearing a check shirt and torn, dirty jeans.
2. Duncan Ferguson (Everton): With that natural arrogance which is so plainly Duncan, I imagine a master-servant situation. Obviously he holds the whip.
3. Steve McManaman (Liverpool): Steve is that really good-looking bloke whom you see across a bar and who flirts outrageously with you all night.
4. Ugo Ehiogu (Aston Villa): My yearning for something exotic results in us sharing drinks, then a heated whirlpool bath.
5. Ryan Giggs (Man Utd): One word — watersports.
6. David Beckham (Man Utd): We get talking and he lets me educate him as to the error of his ways with the least appropriately named Spice Girl.

Here, Simon's squad terminates because, rather sweetly, he doesn't want to part with his stickers of Henning Berg, Mark Pembroke, Neil Ardley, Chris Armstrong and Jamie Redknapp, and feels the magic will not work in description alone.

Perhaps he is right. For myself, I can't quite shake off the feeling that, because of a path denied to me by a whim of nature, all my life I have watched but half a match.

CRICKET: TROUBLED WEEK PRECEDES SECOND INTERNATIONAL AGAINST CONFIDENT PAKISTAN

West Indies survive test of patience

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN RAWALPINDI

THAT was the week that was for West Indies. From Peshawar, where they lost the first Test match against Pakistan inside four days, they travelled to Hyderabad, where they declared the hotel accommodation unacceptable and returned to Karachi. A one-day game in Hyderabad was abandoned when the pitch was waterlogged and so they reached Rawalpindi, where the second Test starts today, in high dudgeon.

Clive Lloyd, their manager, who took them away from Hyderabad as soon as he discovered that his players would have to sleep three to a room in a rest house, is in no mood to compromise. Faxes

have been flying backwards and forwards all week between the touring party and the Pakistan Cricket Board in an attempt to establish the degree of culpability.

It is easy to take sides with Lloyd. Some of the stories about the Hyderabad experience are almost beyond belief. Players who went into the kitchen found the chef preparing food on the floor. Michael Holding, covering the series for Caribbean television, discovered scorpions trying to invade his hotel room and was told: "They're only little ones."

What on earth the West Indians were doing in a place like that is hard to imagine. It is one thing taking the game to parts of the country where international players are rarely seen, but surely nobody



Waqar recall

sound of mind sends touring teams to towns that are not equipped to stage such games, never mind keeping the players in bread and water.

All of which means that West Indies go into the final two Tests of this series having had no cricket since their shambolic performance in Peshawar. They have doubts about the fitness of Ambrose and Stuart Williams and will probably prefer another fast bowler, most likely Rose, to Lewis, whose wrist spin looks ordinary.

The pitch is green in appearance, drier than the rest of a square that has absorbed a lot of rain, and offers the prospect of decent pace. Pakistan, therefore, may go into the match with only one spinner, Mushtaq Ahmed, although Maslaam, the off spinner left out of the first Test, is available. He replaces Arshad Khan, who looked out of his depth in Peshawar and was a "local

pick" if ever there was one. Waqar Younis, omitted at Peshawar for reasons that were hard to fathom and have not been fully explained, will play and Shoaib Akhtar, a local bowler who toured England earlier this year with the Pakistan A team, will probably make his Test debut. Once again, Pakistan have shown their aptitude for finding and promoting talented young players.

David Lloyd, the England coach, watched the players at practice after arriving here yesterday. On Tuesday, he moves on to Lahore, where England play two one-day matches next week before the forthcoming quadrangular competition in Sharjah, where Pakistan and West Indies will also be involved.

Blewett joins unlucky 99ers

GREG BLEWETT gained the dubious honour yesterday of being the first Australian to be out on 99 twice, spoiling an otherwise dominant batting display by Australia on the second day of the third Test in Hobart against New Zealand.

Despite a late flurry of wickets, Australia were in command at 273 for five at the close, having added 234 runs for the first day was lost to rain. Blewett, who played on to his stumps one short of what would have been his fifth Test century, also played on when on 99 last January in the fourth Test against

West Indies. He is the seventh player in Test history to be out twice on 99. Michael Atherton, the England captain, is the only other present player to have met this fate.

Matthew Elliott, the left-handed opener, scored his third Test century, although he was dropped twice and will not look back on the innings as one of his prettiest.

Elliott's dismissal for 114, when the score was 238, triggered a collapse, with four wickets falling for 28 runs. Simon Doull, the medium-pacer, took two wickets for one run in ten balls. Scoreboards, page 34

Ganguly denied century

SOURAV GANGULY was dismissed one run short of a second successive Test century as India compiled a formidable first-innings total on the first day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Nagpur.

However, rain prevented any play after lunch and gave Sri Lanka an excellent chance of avoiding defeat. Ganguly, who made 109 in the drawn first Test last week, helped India to take their overnight score of 401 for five to 485 all out. Sri Lanka have yet to start their reply.

Ganguly was caught at first slip off Ravindra Pushpakumara, the seam

bowler, whose five wickets ensured that India lost their last five batsmen in adding only 23 runs. Ganguly and Kumble took their overnight stand of 98 to 159 before Kumble, who completed his third Test half-century in 42 matches, was run out.

Srinath was leg-before to Jayasuriya, the left-arm spinner, and then Chauhan and Ganguly were dismissed in successive balls. Pushpakumara moved one away from Ganguly and Tilakaratne took a smart, low catch. Pushpakumara then had Kuruvilla leg-before to finish with five for 122.

Westwood revels in confidence of youth

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES IN MELBOURNE

THE Australians were a bit taken aback by Lee Westwood after the second round of the Australian Open at the Metropolitan club in Melbourne yesterday. They knew that he was the European No 3 this season and that he was in prime form, having won twice in the four weeks before the Open, but they were not quite prepared for the self-confident young man who had a 66, six under par, to be just one shot off the lead, on 134, ten under.

Andrew Coltart, the Scot who won the Australian PGA Championship in Sydney last Sunday, had led, on 11 under par, after four birdies in his first seven holes, but the gusting southwesterly wind reduced him to a guessing game and he dropped six shots in the last ten holes to finish with a 74 and a total of 139, six behind the obligatory Open unknown.

Nick O'Hern, 26, a left-hander from Perth, Western Australia, was out in front, having carried his own bag to a 67 on Thursday and then, with his wife, Alana, in charge of the clubs, added a 66 yesterday. But O'Hern, who uses a 48-inch putter and has made only three cuts (this one included) in his career, has nothing like the experience of Westwood, 24, and they are

both aware of the man in third place, on 135, one Greg Norman. He has won the title for the past two years and is also the world No 1. Not that it bothers Westwood.

"Sure I can," he answered, when asked if he could win. "I'm in the second-best position out of anybody at the moment, but Greg Norman's still there and you can't take the world No 1 lightly when he's one shot behind you."

In his early days, Westwood said, he was in awe of some players, including Norman, but that is in the past. "Reputations shouldn't count for anything when you're playing against people," he said. "After a while you learn to believe you are as good as them. I don't think there's any real difference between my game and Greg Norman's, but he's a lot more used to being in contention. He's been out there a lot longer than I have."

Norman, a venerable 42, recalled how he had taken 80 when paired with Jack Nicklaus for the first time, in the Australian Open, as a youngster. "The first time I played with Nicklaus, I shot 70," Westwood said, mischievously. That was this year, in the final round at Augusta, but he had made his audience sit up.

ATHLETICS

Chataway to lead recovery

BY JOHN GOODBODY

SIR Christopher Chataway, the former MP and world 5,000 metres record-holder, is to head a steering group to plan the future of British athletics, whose governing body is in administration with a deficit of £530,000.

In the meantime, £300,000 of taxpayers' money will be used to fund a new company, UK Athletics '98, which will provide interim organisation. Also on the steering group is David Moorcroft, the former chief executive officer of the British Athletic Federation, and Sir Paul Fox, the former managing director of BBC network television.

A leading promotional company, such as the International Management Group or Alan Pascoe Associates, may well take over the commercial side of the sport, such as the running of international meetings. Moorcroft said yesterday that there were "better agencies" at delivering some areas of the sport than the national governing body.

Moorcroft added that many now accepted that a national registration scheme for all athletes was likely. This exists in other Olympic sports, such as swimming, rowing, judo and weightlifting and is fundamental towards the funding of those sports.



OFFICIAL
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ENGLAND
RUGBY

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Far too skilful to be trusted

How sad and symptomatic that almost as soon as Christian Gross has taken charge of Tottenham Hotspur, the cry goes up that he will, and should, jettison David Ginola.

Symptomatic of the deep distrust that English football traditionally has for the unorthodox player, whether it be Charlie Buchan, Len Shackleton or those other Spurs stars, Glenn Hoddle and Paul Gascoigne.

Sad, too, the concomitant emphasis that Gross will have Tottenham training and running harder. It takes one back to the aftermath of England's historic 6-3 defeat by Hungary at Wembley, 44 years ago, when Watford, then a third division club, promptly announced that in future, their players would be training twice a day!

In principle, one welcomes the arrival of Continental coaches in this country, something one has long recommended. Ruud Gullit has given new life and allure to Chelsea. Arsène Wenger is at least an interesting figure at Arsenal, though his

disciplinary tolerance and his transfer policy remain unconvincing.

Danny Bergara, the Uruguayan, beavered in the lower reaches of the League, has had his moments. Overall, however, there has been scant reciprocity between Britain and the world at large. British coaches initially went out to teach and preach the game. Even today, the demand for them abroad is quite startling.

Scarcely had Graeme Souness been run out on a rail from Torino, of Italy's Serie B, then he had been made manager of famous, if impoverished, Benfica. Scarcely had Gerry Francis left Spurs than the other big Lisbon club, Sporting, were knocking at his door.

As against that, Jozef Venglos, the likeable and able Slovakian, failed as a manager at Villa Park despite one hallucinatory home success against Internazionale. He never really got to grips with his players.



BRIAN GLANVILLE



Ginola in action on Monday night. Most of Tottenham's best attacks stemmed from him

Ivan Golac, a right back for Yugoslavia and Southampton, made a bright beginning in charge of Dundee United, even winning the Scottish Cup against Rangers, but thereafter it was all downhill. Oscar Arce, the much travelled Argentine, had limited success as coach at Sunderland and Sheffield United, but did good work with Millwall's juniors.

Part of the trouble, clearly, is that the role of the manager abroad is so different from here, where he is expected to be a Protean figure, a wheeler-dealer as well as a coach.

Can Gross succeed? One hopes so, though the odds are against him and the appointment, on the face of it, is a strange one. Not because one has anything but respect for Swiss football, whose qualities tend to be underrated.

Doubts reside in the fact that Gross's appointment seems to have been made in some panic, involving a manager who, however able, hardly arrives trailing

clouds of glory. Wenger, by contrast, was very much a known quantity, for seven years the successful manager of AS Monaco before he went off to make money in Japan.

Much nonsense has been talked, not least by Alan Sugar, about Gerry Francis having somehow "betrayed" his principles, implying that he should have gone on trying to grind out results rather than go for exciting football in the grand Tottenham tradition.

Which is where Ginola comes in. What Francis so long needed, and notably failed to find, was an "inside-forward" in the White-Harmer-Hoddle-Gascoigne succession to make things happen in midfield.

Against Crystal Palace last Monday night Ginola supplied the want by moving into the middle of the left wing. If gaps were thus left there, why did other players not fill them? Ginola showed outstanding skills, used the ball well, and was behind almost every decent Spurs attack. If he


lost the ball before the only goal of the game to Edworthy, should not Clements, running with the full back, have caught him?

I declare an interest. I have followed Ginola's mercurial career since watching his dazzling displays in the Toulon under-21 tournament nine years ago, when he was an inside forward rather than a right-footed left winger.

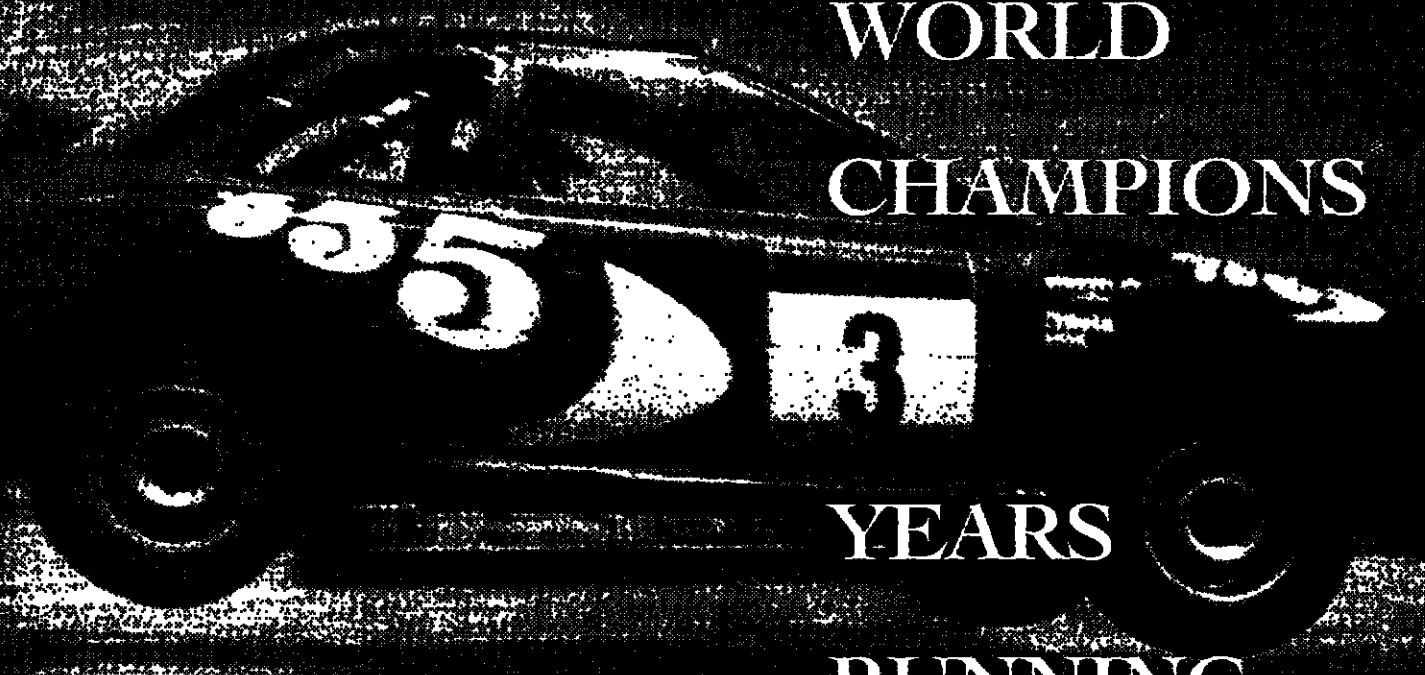
Kevin Keegan, another believer, thinks Ginola was traumatised when sent off two seasons ago against Arsenal. More probably, it was when he was blamed for giving the ball away near the end of the France-Bulgaria World Cup game in Paris, costing a goal by Kostadinov, defeat and elimination from the 1994 finals.

Am I in an informed minority? Note, pray, that after Monday's game, Ginola was warmly praised by Steve Coppell, Palace's manager, despite his "shortcomings". It was Disraeli who said that "the defects of great men are the consolation of dunces".

Leboeuf's view, page 39



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A miracle on Merseyside

Mark Hodgkinson experiences mixed emotions while travelling to Anfield on Barnsley's magic bus

The ball is in the net (apparently), and my new best friend has me in an aggressively affectionate headlock. He is screaming — yelling — shouting down my ear. When my brother grim finally lets go, I have to stay on my feet and volunteer an extra syllable to Barnsley as we cheer "Barns-a-lee" to the afternoon sky.

I am not a Barnsley supporter (I am not even from Yorkshire), yet here I am at Anfield, the only impartial observer among 3,000 devotees in the away end. As experiences go, this is strictly exiles, like passing a church and suddenly finding yourself at a wedding ceremony among strangers, and strange strangers at that.

The day begins at Oakwell, a fog drifting across the club car park. We all have neatly printed coach tickets and neatly packed lunches. Barnsley, at the foot of the table, have lost their past five away games and conceded 40 goals already this season. Understandably, no one mentions football as the coach picks its way through the mist towards Liverpool. The man behind me, however, mentions crisps a lot. He has a two-year-old grandson and has found a sure-fire way of making baby-sitting easy. "Crisps, I just feed him crisps," he explains. "How many does that give him?" asks his friend. "Oh, about four packets."

The coach parks alongside Stanley Park at the ludicrously early time of 1.30pm — this day is going to be long. I look at my match ticket and start to worry. Row 1, Seat 36, and, just to confirm that I have got the seat from hell, stamped across it is "Uncovered Seat", which means get set to get wet.

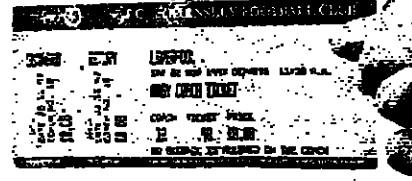
Now, I'm actually very lucky to have the ticket. Barnsley is a club loyal to its principles, and, initially, only season ticket holders were allowed to buy one. "They'd lynch me if I sold one to a reporter," revealed a member of staff.

Row 1, Seat 36, in the Lower Anfield Road End is as appalling as it sounds. To create Row 1, Seat 36 in your own living room, you must switch on *Match of the Day* and lie down flat on your stomach about six inches from the television. Place a fruit bowl between you and the screen — at Anfield, this is a photographer and his equipment — and, just in case there remains a modicum of enjoyment from your mole's eye view, ask various members of your family to push past wearing fluorescent jackets in the manner of club stewards.


The supporters sharing my mole hole all appear to be disconcertingly above average height and weight, not to mention volume and intoxication. On either side, sit two blokes, the size of telephone boxes. When they both stand up, which is every ten seconds, I have no choice but to rise with them. The one on my left is middle-aged, and, it seems, fairly peaceable. Abruptly, he asks a steward to move out of the way. "You couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery, yer Scouse bastard," he yells as an afterthought.

If football has gone effete, no one has told Barnsley. Everyone sings. Murus, dads, lads, they all scream themselves hoarse, and the look in their eyes is intense; it betrays a raw, bloody-minded passion for their team, their town, their family, their mates. They sing as if their lives depend on it, and I do too.


Out on the pitch, Barnsley are hardly in the game, but, on a break, the ball appears to find its way into Liverpool's net. Here comes my head lock, and, for a horrible second, my neighbour is squeezing me violently, pressing his face close to mine. In this maelstrom of hostile pleasure, I have never



Art and s
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Everton fans ve



Details that go on

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Art and soul of dedicated football man

He may have a teen idol's looks and a pop star girlfriend, but the real Jamie Redknapp is focused on the welfare of Liverpool and England

The giant metal doors swung open and the gatekeeper appeared. Lugubrious and suspicious, the guardian of the Liverpool training ground seemed puzzled that anyone wanted to invade his territory on the players' day off. Then the question brought a smile to his face. "Jamie?" he said, half-turning. "He's out there on his own."

Out there on the great expanse of green in the midst of the Merseyside suburbs, Jamie Redknapp was lost in his own private world, a solitary figure consumed by his art. A woolly hat pulled down over his ears, he practised and he practised until the sweat was dripping from him. He could have been any player pursuing the dream of perpetual improvement.

Occasionally, for a bit of light relief, he worked on some tricks, mainly an exotic turn effected by jumping on top of the ball and dragging it round to one side with the top of the foot in one eye-blinking moment.

For the most part, though, it was hard labour, working on his weaker left foot, crashing shot after shot against the wooden practice walls away on the far side of the pitch. He only had one ball to work with: if the shot went high or wide, he trotted off doggedly to retrieve it.

Eventually, he finished. He juggled the ball, not on the top of his foot but on his upturned instep, 30 or 40 times and then, as a finale, he flicked it up with a flourish and volleyed it towards one of the goals. It cannoned against the underside of the crossbar and bounced down and up into the net. The session over, he strode back to the clubhouse.

And the rest of his day off? He drove to a city-centre restaurant, had a bowl of pasta and talked about football, about Terry Venables and Glenn Hoddle, the England managers he has played under, and about the plight of Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, and his respect for the man who is coming under increasing pressure at Goodison Park.

When he got back to his waterfront flat with its vaulted

The point is not that Redknapp is a one-dimensional man. If anything, the opposite is true. Young, with a face that launched a thousand teen-magazine cover stories and shot him to the top of countless polls on the sexiest footballers, he has remained refreshingly unaffected by his fame, considerate to his fans, unflinchingly loyal to his family and his girlfriend, the pop star, Louise, and amusing, unassuming lunchtime company.

The point is that Redknapp cares about football and most of all that he cares about Liverpool and about his own performance. It should not have to be made, especially about someone like him who oozes conscientiousness and honesty.

But when things go wrong at Liverpool, the critics dust off the Spice Boys headlines, jump him in with Steve McNamara, Robbie Fowler and Jason McAteer — who were all, incidentally, at the training ground on their day off, too — and accuse them of leaving their passion for the club on the dance floor or the catwalk. It is a convenient line that has long since lost all relevance, but it is so much easier to criticise them than a nice man such as Roy Evans.

Their 1-0 defeat at home to Barnsley last Saturday, the biggest FA Cup Premier League shock of the season, unleashed another tide of criticism, more talk of an Anfield crisis and, most of all, the allegation that the supposed arrogance and nonchalance of some of the players amounts to a betrayal of their manager, Alan Hansen, their former central defender, became the latest in a long line of columnists to savage the team and question the commitment of

the players. Redknapp and Liverpool have the perfect opportunity to ram those comments back down the throats of their critics when they take on Arsenal at Highbury tomorrow in one of the day's two mouth-watering matches.

Next Saturday, they play United at Anfield. Good results in both games and they will be right back in the championship reckoning. If that happens, maybe then people will start to believe that they care.

"It amazes me really that people still seem to think that we can lose and somehow not be affected by it," Redknapp said. "We probably haven't helped ourselves in the past but I don't know what people expect or what people want from you. We have got beaten against Barnsley but we worked hard and it just did not happen for us on the day. You do have those days. It happens to all teams."

"I have never seen the lads as upset about it after the game. I am usually quite

relaxed, quite laid-back about things in general but some of the fans were having a little go when we were coming off and I lost my head and had a go back and that is unlike me. But it hurt. It was not really meant as anything but I was upset and I saw somebody shouting and hollering and I had a go back. I do not know what people want because in terms of effort we give everything we can."

I mean, we hate losing. I know we have got this reputation but it is the biggest load of rubbish ever. When we lose, it knocks me for six. I bring it home with me. It upsets my whole week. My whole week revolves around how we get on. Some people say they can't believe how much I let it worry me. It affects the whole tone of training, the whole mood around the club. If you win on Saturday, you can't wait to go on Monday because everybody will be buzzing but when you get beat, it is awful.

"Because of the talent we have got, people see that and they cannot believe how easily we have thrown it away in the past. I have to hold my hands up because we have done. Last year we were so near but yet so far. We ended up finishing fourth, which was a joke because at worst we should have been second and even that is not good enough for Liverpool."

"We do get things thrown at us but I do think people are too quick to jump on our backs but that will never change until we go and win the league and prove to people that we care. It hurts, but I feel like I have said that until I am blue in the face."

"As long as I know myself that I am doing everything I can to make me a better player and work hard on a Saturday, then that is all that matters. The people that say all these things, they don't know me and they don't know the other lads. They just think they know you and I think there may be a hint of jealousy with some of the people who say

those things. I honestly believe that we are not far away from getting it right."

"We are all in it together with the gaffer and the rest of the staff. We missed Paul Ince and Robbie against Barnsley. Being the genius that he is, Robbie always gets on the end of things in games like that. We are not far away from United really, but if we get one bad result then suddenly it's all gloom and doom and people saying we are rubbish again."

Redknapp, who is personable and as down to earth as his father, has been at Anfield for almost seven years now after Kenny Dalglish signed him from Bournemouth for £350,000 when he was 17. Gradually, he has matured into one of the best passers of the ball in the Premiership, a fact acknowledged by Hoddle, who has made no secret of his desire to use him in the role of sweeper because of his ability to hit long, searching passes. He has been capped eight times for his country, includ-

ing the game against Scotland in the European championship that he transformed when Venables introduced him as a substitute. An injury later in that game and another last summer at Old Trafford in the international against South Africa have restricted his England appearances, but he is fully fit again now and back near the top of his form. Earlier this month, Hoddle invited him to train with the England squad, something commonly seen as a precursor to a full recall and a chance to stake his claim for a place in the World Cup squad of 22.

Maybe then, if it has not happened already, people will rush to accept the reality that he is the genuine article. "Football is my life," he said. "It always has been. I speak to my Dad every day, maybe twice a day, without fail and 99.9 per cent of the conversation is about football. Some people might think that's shallow but it's always been my life and nothing else interests me. That is the way it is."



Jamie Redknapp's frequent conversations with his father, Harry, are dominated by one topic — their mutual love of the game

OLIVER HOLT



brick ceiling and its view of the cathedral spires, he went straight to the television to look at the headlines on teletext and read the top story about David Burrows rejoining Ron Atkinson at Sheffield Wednesday.

In the evening, he spoke to his father, Harry Redknapp, the manager of West Ham United, about football and watched Manchester United's Champions' League game against FC Kosice.

Everton fans vent fury at Johnson

By DAVID MADDOCK

AT THE Everton training ground yesterday, a handful of schoolchildren and a distinctly bored-looking mongrel constituted the sum total of interest in the club that lies bottom of the FA Cup Premier League. How different it will be this afternoon.

Merseyside Police have been given a warning that thousands of Everton supporters are planning a mass demonstration after the match at Goodison Park with Tottenham Hotspur. Hundreds of officers have been drafted in and a cordon of stewards will be thrown around the ground.

The target for what will undoubtedly be a torrent of abuse, should Everton lose, is Peter Johnson, the Everton chairman. The supporters are angry that he has failed to put any money into the club, bar his original investment when purchasing control from Lady Grantham, of the Moores family.

More than 20,000 leaflets will be distributed before the game, urging supporters to protest against Johnson's reign. The text will demand that Johnson "get out his chequebook, or get out".

It is against this grim backdrop that Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, must prepare his side for a game that already looks significant in the

struggle to avoid relegation from the Premiership. Everton's tenure in the top division has continued uninterrupted for 43 years and, despite the fears of supporters, the manager remains confident that the run will not be broken this season. "I can understand the frustration of the fans but we

have no doubts and we are not even thinking about relegation," he said. "We are in a difficult position, but we have played three away games, two against teams in the top three in the country, and there has been little to choose between us."

Whilst much morbid interest will be



Kendall, centre, is facing growing unrest among Everton supporters

Gullit goes to school with three Dutch masters

By MATT DICKINSON

by the eagle-eyed observers, said.

"I want to get the Dutch badge because I know I still have much to learn about this job. I fell into it and until now I have been getting by on intuition."

"The Dutch badge is very highly regarded across the world. It means you can work anywhere you want. The great thing about it is that it allows everyone to have their opinions on how to play the game."

"It is about finding solutions to different problems. From what I understand, to get the badge in England you have to play in a certain way."

Chelsea supporters are understandably anxious that Gullit's pursuit of further education will pave the way for him to move abroad, if not to his former club, AC Milan, who are going through up-

heaval, then to Holland as

manager of the national team. Koeman, now assistant to the international team along with Neeskens, did little to end that speculation when he said: "Ruud taking the certificate would mean he could coach the national team and it is certainly a possibility. He is a great name around the world already but even he would admit he can learn more about the game. That is why we all take this badge."

Gullit emphasised, however, that he could not be more content and claimed that there was no rush to sign a new contract at Stamford Bridge, even though his runs out next year. "I am fully dedicated to working at Chelsea," he said. "The opportunity came up to take the qualification and it is good for the club as well that I do it."

Gullit is being offered a new three-year contract by Chelsea.

Penalties that go on and on and...

LOVE 'em or hate 'em, penalty shoot-outs play an increasingly decisive role in the congested fixture lists of modern-day football. Sometimes, they are concluded in a trice; sometimes, they go on for ever — as the youngsters of Bristol Rovers and Swindon Town will testify. In their first-round replay in The Times FA Youth Cup on Thursday, which had ended in a 0-0 draw after extra time, Rovers eventually went through 10-9 on penalties. It took 24 attempts to achieve the result.

However, it is not a record. In the first qualifying round of the FA Cup this season, after two 2-2 draws, Marlow defeated Littlehampton 11-10 on spot kicks when Mark Howells, the Littlehampton goalkeeper, shot wide — the first miss after 21 successes. It equalled Aldershot's 11-10 triumph against Fulham, in the Freight Rover Trophy in 1987, and North

Korea's 11-10 win against Hong Kong, in the Asian Cup in 1975, but was still some way short of the world best. In Argentina in 1988, Argentinos Juniors beat Racing Club 20-19.

Taking flight

Yeovil Town supporters and club officials have decided to let the plane take the strain when they make the long trek to Gateshead for a Vauxhall Conference fixture this afternoon. They have chartered a flight to carry their 104-strong party from Bournemouth to Newcastle, travelling in relative comfort and arriving in good time for kick-off. No such jet-setting for the Yeovil players: they travelled by coach.

Something fishy

Bucharest's 22-storey Inter-Continental Hotel offers a fine



view over the Romanian capital, as several members of the Aston Villa party discovered when they stayed there before Villa's Uefa Cup third-round tie against Steaua Bucharest on Tuesday.

Had the mist not been so persistent, they could have seen even farther and perhaps caught a glimpse of the magnificent palace built by Nicolae Ceausescu, the former Romanian dictator. The hotel's rooftop restaurant offers fine food, too, especially

sturgeon, in many guises, and zander. However, few diners were tempted to sample the grilled carp, just in case. On the menu, the middle two letters of the fish had been printed the wrong way round.

Name of the day

Trazenzpor, of Turkey, have released two players after a series of poor league performances. Davor Vugrinec, the Croatian forward, has been unable to find a new club, but, somewhat strangely, his former team-mate has. Excelsior Mouscron, of Belgium, have opened talks with the glorious, yet predicable, £12 million asking price, his disposal of players last summer having realised £21 million.

STRANGE BUT TRUE: London has more professional football clubs than any city except Buenos Aires.

Robson resists Shevchenko chase

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

ANDREI SHEVCHENKO, the Ukraine and Dynamo Kiev striker, is one of the most sought-after players in the world. His displays in the European Cup Champions' League, in which he has scored five goals in five matches, have attracted several wealthy suitors, Manchester United and Newcastle United included.

Middlesbrough, though, have dropped out of the race. Bryan Robson, the manager, has watched Shevchenko play and has the funds readily available for the ridiculous, yet predicable, £12 million asking price, his disposal of players last summer having realised £21 million.

Robson, though, is not interested: Shevchenko is not his type. "He's too similar to the players who are already here," Viv Anderson, Robson's assis-



stant, said yesterday. "He is a name on our list and we've watched him. Bryan has gone to see him play, but we won't be following it up now."

Instead, Middlesbrough have resigned Jaime Moreno, their former Bolivian striker, on loan until Christmas. He scored 20 goals in 26 games for DC United in the United States and could move permanently to the Riverside Stadium in the new year. He is unlikely to feature in Middlesbrough's home game against West Bromwich Albion in the Nationwide League first division this afternoon.

At the opposite end of the financial spectrum, Oxford United yesterday sold Bobby Ford, 23, their midfield player, to Sheffield United for £400,000, giving Oxford a ray of hope as they attempt to sort out debts of £10 million and losses of £800,000 a season.

"What we have got to look at is the club going on," Denis Smith, the Oxford manager, said. "The club is far more important than any individual. Bobby moving has kept the club going. He has gone to a bigger club. Whether they are a better club, I don't know, but they are going for promotion and we wish him well."

"This transfer makes life a lot easier for us all. We can get paid, which is a nice way to live your life when you are working." Ford made 115 League appearances for Oxford, scoring seven goals.

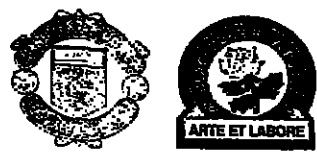
In contrast, Wrexham, the

second division club, have revealed that Brian Flynn, the manager, and other members of staff will share bonuses of almost £120,000 this year. Pryce Griffiths, the Wrexham chairman, told the club's annual meeting that it was the first time the incentive scheme, introduced four years ago, had produced such a healthy figure because Wrexham made a pre-tax profit of £480,000 last season.

Fulham, apparently wallowing in the financial largesse of Mohamed Al Fayed, the Craven Cottage benefactor, will not be able to field their latest signings — Alan Neilson, Paul Trollope and Steve McNaspie — against Preston North End at Deepdale today.

The registrations of the trio, who moved for a combined fee of almost £2 million, were received too late by the Football League yesterday.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY



MANCHESTER UNITED
v
BLACKBURN ROVERS
Tomorrow, 3.0 (sold out)



Oliver Holt
Roy Hodgson, the Blackburn Rovers manager, was a watching admirer at Old Trafford last Thursday, when Manchester United eased through to the quarter-finals of the Champions' League. Yesterday, as the slanting rain beat against the windows of the Blackburn training headquarters, near Clitheroe, he was busy finalising plans to dethrone them.

through the ranks together. But I still believe we can beat them." Against FC Kosice, a strolling United looked as if they were playing well within themselves, preserving some of their energies for the match tomorrow, one of the dozen or so in the Premiership for which they know they must be at their best. It could have a bearing on the destination of the title.

United will be deprived of Paul Scholes, their most influential and inspired player in recent games. Scholes ran the game for them against Kosice and his verve, his vision and his precise passing are bound to be missed, even by a club with such vast resources.

Ferguson has played Ronnie Johnson in recent games so that he would be ready to replace Scholes when the suspension bit. Johnson took the stage in central defence last Thursday, but he is likely to be pushed into central midfield alongside Nicky Butt tomorrow with Henning Berg regaining his place next to Gary Pallister.

United are on fire at the moment, racing with confidence and unshakable self-belief that has been boosted even further by their Champions' League success.

The last time they played a club one place below them, Arsenal, they lost. This time, it would be foolish to bet against them, although the absence of Scholes may cost them victory.

Manchester United (probable: 4-4-2): P. Scholes, G. Neville, H. Berg, G. Pallister, R. Johnson, D. Blackburn, R. Johnson, N. Butt, R. Dwyer, E. Sheenham, A. Cole. Blackburn Rovers (probable: 4-4-2): T. Flowers, P. Velez, S. Hendrick, C. Coleman, J. Kerrins, S. Rieley, J. Sheenham, G. Pittcroft, M. McNulty, A. Wilson, K. Gallacher. Referee: A. Wilson.

TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Highlights on Sky Sports, 12.30am.
PREDICTION: Blackburn to halt United's rampage.



Saintly progress: Gary Lineker played for Everton and Spurs during his pre-television career — but he wouldn't join them now



11
ELEVEN

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Everton v Spurs at Goodison Park today brings together two once-upon-a-time members of the Big Five who have fallen on hard times. Here are some reminders that nobody is immune from the dreaded word "They used to be a big club, you know."

1. Wanderers: Five of the first seven FA Cups, but unheard of since they scratched from a tie against Bar's Hospital in 1881-82.
2. Queen's Park: Ten Scottish Cups in 20 years — all before the turn of the century.
3. Preston North End: "Proud" won the first two Football League championships. Oh, and Tom Finney played for them as well.
4. Huddersfield Town: The first team to complete a championship hat-trick under Herbert Chapman. Sadly not as successful after he left for Highbury.
5. Blackpool: Matthews, Mortensen in 1953... the tower and sticks of rock now.
6. Sunderland: Almost did the Double in 1913 as one of six championships, reliant on Bob Stokoe's hat for highlights since.
7. Wolves: Three titles in the 1950s, just Bull these days.
8. Portsmouth: Successive championships after the war — sunk without trace now.
9. Burnley: Vintage club in the 60s and 60s. Vin Ordinaire these days.
10. Manchester City: Four trophies in three seasons with a centre forward called Lee. Wonder what happened to him?
11. Liverpool: Only joking, lads.

Compiled by Richard Whitehead



Keith Pike
A rare shaft of light in a season of gloom or a platform on which to build an unlikely escape route? Most probably the former, but Barnsley's victory over Liverpool last week has instilled hope where little appeared to exist.

Has Danny Wilson, the manager, stumbled upon the secret of eternal FA Carling Premiership life? The truth is less fanciful. "We didn't want to get hammered any more," Neil Redfern, their mid-field player, explained yesterday. "Now it is all about the next game."

Victory over Leeds United today could lift Barnsley out of the



BARNLEY
v
LEEDS UNITED
Today, 3.0 (sold out)

bottom three. With Kewell unavailable and Hopkin suspended, this may not be a bad time to be playing their Yorkshire rivals and a sell-out crowd at Oakwell will be willing them on. If public sympathy counts for anything, they should prosper.

Everyone loves an underdog, but even more so when they possess the type of honesty that Andy Liddell displayed at Anfield.

His refusal to go to ground under James's illegal challenge was rewarded instantly when his cross set up Ward's winner, and may prove to be one of the most significant — as well as praiseworthy — moments of the season.

Barnsley (probable: 4-4-2): L. Jones — N. Egan, A. de Zeeuw, P. Marfield, D. Barnard — M. Bullock, E. Trinder, N. Redfern, A. Moses — A. Liddell, A. Ward. Leeds United (probable: 4-4-2): M. Marryn — G. Hulse, D. Womersley, L. Richards, D. Robertson — G. Kelly, L. Brown, A. Hirst, S. Pardo — J. Hasselbaink, R. Wallace. Referee: M. Reed.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Barnsley revival to continue with a point.



CHELSEA
v
DERBY COUNTY
Today, 3.0 (sold out)



Matt Dickinson
Chelsea joint-top of the league for the first time since 1978? Ruud Gullit, the

player-manager, seemed unaware of the statistic, or even the possibility, yesterday. He was, however, less than happy that Chelsea's FA Carling Premiership midweek win over Everton had been described as fortunate. "If we do not play so good and win, everyone says we are lucky," the Dutchman said. "If Manchester United do it, everyone calls them clever. Luck does not come just by sitting on your chair and waiting to win the lottery. You have to work hard for it."

Chelsea almost certainly will have to do so today against Jim Smith's Derby County side, sixth in the Premiership and likely to be bolstered by the return of Igor Stimac, the captain, and Robin van der Laan from injury.

For Chelsea, Steve Clarke may be absent with a calf injury, but Frank Leboeuf is expected to have recovered from a groin problem. The Chelsea back four will have to be at their most watchful against a side who have scored six goals in their past two Premiership games, with Paulo Wanchope probably the centre of attention.

Gullit was in dismissive mood when it came to the Costa Rican. "You see players that have moments in a season when everything is going well for them," he said. "You can only really judge over the whole campaign."

Much the same can be said of Chelsea, even if they do draw level with Manchester United today. Not that Gullit seemed bothered. "It is still too early for us. For me it is not important whether we are in first or third place. I just want to be in the top five for the next few months. That is when it gets really important."

Chelsea (probable: 4-4-2): E. de Gooij — B. Limboud, F. Leboeuf, M. Duberry, C. Rabarero — D. Petrovic, R. D. Matteo, D. Wice, J. Morris — M. Hughes, G. Zola. Derby County (4-4-2): M. Poom — C. Powell, I. Stimac, R. van der Laan, G. Dally — M. Soto, S. Ezzamel, D. Powell — P. Warchoppe, F. Siano, D. Burridge. Referee: P. Durrant.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, BBC1 10.50pm, extended highlights.
PREDICTION: Chelsea to win by the odd goal.

ON MONDAY

Brilliant insights or hopeless guesses? Check our writers' predictions against their weekend match reports



David Maddock
A lost cat recently came home on Merseyside after going missing for seven years — and keeled over and died.

One suspects that a similar, albeit metaphorical, fate awaits Howard Kendall, the Everton manager. Bottom of the table, barely a bean for new players and a squad so demoralised — he should never have gone back.

A real sense of pessimism has settled over Everton this season. Desperate supporters are preparing a justice campaign, with T-shirts bearing the plea: "Free the Goodison 30,000". Maybe some should read: "Slaven Bilic is innocent". Sent off again in



EVERTON
v
TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR
Today, 3.0

midweek, this most important of players in the fight for FA Carling Premiership survival will serve his second ban within the space of a month.

Tottenham Hotspur have similar problems and one suspects that they will not be eased by the

arrival of Christian Gross as manager. Some of the players at White Hart Lane are unlikely to take kindly to being told they are unfit, both physically and spiritually.

Expect a few of the more saleable ones to jump ship during the next few months, with David Ginola and Sol Campbell leading the charge.

Everton (probable: 5-3-2): N. Southall — T. Thomas, C. Taylor, S. Biles, C. Short, A. Hinchcliffe — M. Ward, D. Williamson, G. Speed — D. Ferguson, D. Carragher. Tottenham Hotspur (probable: 4-4-2): I. Walker — S. Carr, A. Vago, S. Campbell, A. Sinton — L. Ferdinand, S. Hester. Referee: P. Jones.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.
PREDICTION: Possibly the most nervous draw in the history of football.

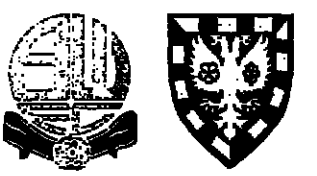


Mark Hodgkinson
The unlikely refrain of *Molly Malone* could well ring out across the Reebok Stadium today as Bolton Wanderers prepare to bait the FA Carling Premiership visitors. Dublin might be a fair city where the girls are so pretty, but the Wimbledon fans prefer Merton, South London.

Dean Holdsworth, the sage that he is, has already checked out of his hotel. The former Wimbledon player has heard that a coachload of nefarious jokers armed with eggs, scissors and ghetto-blasters plan to meet him. When the two teams met in the Coca-Cola Cup earlier this sea-

son, the Wimbledon squad pelted Holdsworth's car with eggs. "It was a strange experience," he mumbled nervously. "I've heard they are going to take my clothes this time."

Alan Kimble has recovered from a hamstring injury and



BOLTON WANDERERS
v
WIMBLEDON
Today, 3.0

son, the Wimbledon squad pelted Holdsworth's car with eggs. "It was a strange experience," he mumbled nervously. "I've heard they are going to take my clothes this time."

Alan Kimble has recovered from a hamstring injury and

Robbie Earle is back from international duty with Jamaica. Bolton have Sellers in their squad after his three-match suspension. Players are leaving the Reebok at some rate. After John McGinley's defection to Bradford City, Steve McAnessie has joined Fulham for £100,000 and Simon Coleman looks sure to join Carlisle United. Peter Beardsley, who played in the reserves this week, is reportedly unsettled.

Bolton Wanderers (probable: 4-4-2): K. Morrison — G. Berron, K. Taylor, M. Fish, M. Whittow — J. Pollock, A. Thompson, P. Francis, M. Johnson — D. Holdsworth, N. Ellis. Wimbledon (probable: 4-4-2): N. Sullivan — K. Cunningham, D. Blackwell, C. Perry, B. Thatcher — M. Hughes, N. Ardley, R. Eales, V. Jones — C. Cori, M. Gayle. Referee: J. Winter.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Low-scoring draw.



Russell Kempson
David Burrows, the Coventry left back, could be excused for having a nightmare this afternoon after a fraught few days. On Thursday he was going to Sheffield Wednesday, to be reunited with Ron Atkinson; yesterday, he wasn't.

Mark Pembroke, the other 50 per cent of the exchange deal, was unable to agree the personal terms of being sent to Coventry and the deal thus foundered. It could be resurrected next week, but Burrows must forget all about lucrative signing-on fees for at least 90 more minutes as Leicester City pay a visit.

Hard to get too excited about



COVENTRY CITY
v
LEICESTER CITY
Today, 3.0

this Midlands shindig, especially as Leicester have gone off the boil since attaining a nosebleeding third place in the Premiership two months ago. Martin O'Neill's scrapers have won only once in six league outings and need to rediscover the early-season spirit

that produced victories against Aston Villa and Liverpool and draws with Manchester United and Arsenal.

Coventry have won only once in nine outings and are perhaps drifting towards another end-of-term dogfight. Neil Lennon almost moved to Highfield Road from Crewe Alexandra for a fee of £750,000 two years ago but, wisely, chose Fubert Street instead. "I've no regrets," he said.

Coventry City (probable: 4-4-2): S. Ogrizovic — N. Nelson, R. Shaw, G. Brown, D. Burrows — P. Toller, G. Mulholland, P. Williams, M. Hall — D. Hughton, D. Durrant. Leicester City (probable: 4-4-2): K. Koller — S. Peto, M. Elliott, S. Walsh — P. Kauran, M. L. East, N. Lennon, S. Wilson, S. Gooch — S. Clendage, I. Marshall. Referee: M. Bodenham.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: Low-scoring draw.



Brian Glanville
Newcastle United deserve to be pitted rather than censured. How can a team hope to compete at top level after losing

Alan Shearer and Faustino Asprilla, two of the game's finest strikers?

Today, for the FA Carling Premiership match against Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park, they hope to welcome back the influential Rob Lee, who missed the midweek match in Barcelona because of a virus, but Darren Peacock, who hurt an ankle in the Nou Camp, will not play.

Palace, as Steve Coppell, their manager, admits, are far less potent at home than away. They



CRYSTAL PALACE
v
NEWCASTLE UNITED
Today, 3.0 (sold out)

seem likely to be without their Italians, Lombardo and Padovano (who hurt his thigh away to Tottenham Hotspur on Monday), but Neil Shipperley and Bruce Dyer are in penetrating form, and the three-man defence is working well, while Kevin Miller,

in goal, made an outstanding save at White Hart Lane.

On the flanks, Edworthy and Gordon are attacking with pace and zest, while Paul Warhurst has strengthened the defence.

Sooner or later, Palace will have to win at home and a depleted Newcastle could give them their chance. If Padovano does not make the cut, they will presumably use two strikers.

Crystal Palace (probable: 3-5-2): K. Miller — A. Lingham, P. Warhurst, M. Henderson — M. Edworthy, S. Rodgers, A. Roberts, C. Veart, D. Gordon — S. Dyer, P. Shipperley. Newcastle United (probable: 4-4-2): S. Helton — A. Barnes, S. Pearce, P. Abbott, J. Beardsley — S. Wallace, D. Baily, R. Lee, J. D. Tomlinson — J. Barnes, T. Mitchell. Referee: M. Riley.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, goal highlights.
PREDICTION: A draw.



Ivo Tennant
After West Ham United's defeat at Eland Road last Sunday, Harry Redknapp, the manager, declared that his

team were "all singing and dancing and looking forward to a long journey home".

How, then, will they feel if they defeat Aston Villa in their FA Carling Premiership match at Upton Park today and have only a short trip back to their families? Perhaps it would be best not to inquire.

West Ham, of course, are a decidedly different proposition at home — at least when Beykovic is concentrating on his impressive game. Kitson, whom Harrison, in



WEST HAM UNITED
v
ASTON VILLA
Today, 3.0 (sold out)

particular, has missed, is close to regaining full fitness and could be included among the substitutes.

Aston Villa, beaten by Steaua Bucharest in the UEFA Cup in midweek, will still be without Taylor, who is suspended for three matches, but Curdie may

return to the squad. Indeed, on account of injuries, Brian Little, now into his fourth year as their manager, will be selecting his team from a squad of 17 players.

Little will be pleased greatly by news that Southgate, who was expected to be out of action for a month because of an injury sustained during England's friendly with Cameroon, could be fit for the club's return fixture against Steaua on December 9.

West Ham United (probable: 4-5-1-2): L. Mikosko — T. Bracken, S. Potts, I. Pearce, D. Unsworth — F. Lamford, S. Lomas, A. Impey — E. Harrison, S. Abou, J. Harrison. Aston Villa (probable: 3-4-1-2): M. Oakes — U. Edozie, S. Staunton, R. Scarnecchia — G. Charles, F. Nelson, M. Dwyer, A. Wright — D. Yorke — S. Collymore, S. Mikkelsen. Referee: P. Acock.

TELEVISION: Today: Match of the Day, extended highlights.
PREDICTION: A draw.



Rob Hughes
Can this still be November, with Arsenal and Liverpool already stretched to breaking-point, struggling to stay

the FA Carling Premiership pace with Manchester United?

Liverpool's visits to Highbury are usually declarations of championship intent. Arsenal have scored only twice, and gained a solitary point, in six league matches against them. However, Bergkamp and Wright would scarcely decline such gifts as the goal Berger handed Barnsley last Saturday.

Liverpool no longer trust their defence. Hence a trip by Roy Evans, the manager, to Norway



ARSENAL
v
LIVERPOOL
Tomorrow, 4.0 (sold out)

last Thursday to see Erik Hofman, 28, the disciplined left-sided defender, and Vegard Heggam, 22, the right back, combine as

Rosenberg blocked out Real Madrid. Leeds United are also interested in Hofman. Evans, meanwhile, runs the

discipline that deprives Liverpool of Ince's midfield bite and Fowler's finish. Both are suspended, but tell Arsenal about accumulated suspensions! Arsenal have incurred more than 100 yellow cards in the past 13 months. Bould and Grimandi are under suspension, although Bergkamp returns, as does Petit. Injuries to Vieira and Parlour also bedevil Arsenal's continuity.

Arsenal (probable: 4-4-2): D. Seaman — L. Dixon, M. Kozmin, A. Adams, M. Whitham — S. D. Blackmore. Liverpool (probable: 4-4-2): D. James — J. McManis, D. Watson, S. Bignone — S. McManis, P. Bignone, J. Redmond, O. Referee: G. P. F.

TELEVISION: Tomorrow: Live on Sky Sports 1, from 3pm.
PREDICTION: A draw, with goals please.

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

To ignore Ginola's ambition would be a Gross mistake

I am not sure that David Ginola and Christian Gross had even shaken hands at Tottenham Hotspur before everyone was assuming that David would be the first casualty of the new regime. If Gross is even half the coach that he is reputed to be, he will not be so hasty in his judgment.

I should declare an interest. David and I spent two years together at Toulon as teenagers and he is one of my best friends. It is strange to think that we have ended up in the FA Carling Premiership together a decade later because, at that time, his career was about to take off while mine almost came to a very premature end, the club releasing me as a 19-year-old, after which I spent two years out of the game.

Football is the last topic of conversation when we socialise in

London these days, but I know enough about the situation at Spurs to say that David, contrary to widespread belief, will not be dreading Gross's arrival.

Gross's strengths seem typical of Germanic coaches, with discipline, fitness and organisation his key points. He reminds me of the German manager we used to have at Strasbourg, who made us train in tracksuits from head to toe, even in the heat of summer. He would not even let us unzip the tops! One day, our goalkeeper fainted through dehydration - but that coach led us to promotion and, when you are winning games, you tolerate anything.

It will be the same for the Spurs players and David will be as happy as anyone to work if it changes the club's fortunes. That may surprise those people who have a fixed idea of him, but he is

one of those players whom people love to talk about without really knowing the man, or the facts.

I know it has hurt him not to be in the international squad and he does care passionately about his football. Anyone who does not believe that should have seen us in training at Toulon all those years ago. We were supposed to be the best, but we almost had a fight one day over a hard tackle, spending the rest of the game looking for revenge. Luckily, we have made up since.

■ Happy to be in shadows

The pressure on gifted players to perform every week is just the same at Chelsea, particularly for someone like Gianfranco Zola. I spoke to him after the game against Everton on Wednesday and he was saying that he felt great in the warm-up and the start



FRANK LEOEUF

of the game. Then, without warning, after 25 minutes he just felt that power drain out of him. That happens to all of us and you cannot put your finger on it. You just have to keep trying your hardest and hope the feeling comes back. That is exactly what Franco did and we ended up with a 2-0 win on Wednesday, despite not playing as well as we can.

It has lifted us to third in the table, so these are exciting times for us all, although you can be sure there will not be talk of championships at Stamford Bridge, even if we beat Derby County today and

go level on points with Manchester United. No one is mentioning us as genuine title challengers and we are more than happy with that situation. Let everyone concentrate on United, Arsenal and Liverpool and leave us in peace. That is how we like it.

■ Dutch masterclass

It is easy to forget that professional players are also still football supporters at heart and I felt like rushing to find an autograph book at the training ground this week. Outside with our manager, Ruud Gullit, were Frank Rijkaard,

Ronald Koeman and Johann Neeskens, all supervising a youth team training session. It is hard to think of a more talented quartet and the young guys must have thought they had died and gone to heaven. Neeskens, in particular, was a boyhood hero of mine. The way he struck the ball, sometimes even seeming to have his eyes closed, made an impact on me even as a six-year-old watching the 1974 World Cup.

The four of them are taking their Dutch coaching certificate and their sessions at Chelsea were part of that programme. Luckily, they had not brought their boots, because they looked like they could have put together a mean five-a-side team, with their compatriot, De Goey, in goal.

■ Platini injustice

I see there has been a poll for an International Hall of Fame and I was amazed to see Michel Platini not only excluded from the top five but way down in eighteenth place. It is a scandal!

For me, there are three greats - Pelé, Maradona and Platini. After that, there are the rest. When Juventus fans voted last season for the best player to have worn the black-and-white shirt, Platini was comfortably the winner - and there have been quite a few stars through that particular club.

I remember when he played his

testimonial seven or eight years ago and, at the end of the game, Maradona rushed up to him to change shirts. You do not get much higher respect than that. Then there was the time that he played at Wembley just at the end of his career and came off shortly before the end of the game to a standing ovation. A Frenchman clapped off at the home of English football? That is indeed a rare accolade!

People seem to have forgotten just how good he was. We all have bias towards our own countrymen, but I cannot believe Platini was not ranked higher. Anyone care to disagree?

■ Family comes first

Apologies for finishing on a downbeat note, but I could not let this column pass without a mention of the horrific massacre in Luxor recently. I had been hoping to take my family to Egypt on holiday in the near future and had even been reading extensively about the country's past in readiness.

I find it a fascinating place, but the ancient words of Ramesses about everyone being equal and giving their best for the good of the country seem empty now. Like Israel, where I have been invited by friends but turned down the invitation because of worries about the safety of my children. Egypt is now a no-go area. How can we stop this barbarism?

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP

(Last week's position in brackets)	PLAYED	POINTS	GOAL DIFF.	HOME					AWAY					LAST 10 MATCHES W - D - L	CURRENT STREAK
				W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A		
1. MANCHESTER UTD (1)	15	31	+24	6	1	0	23	4	3	3	2	13	8	5-3-2	W1
2. BLACKBURN ROVERS (3)	15	30	+14	5	2	1	17	9	3	4	0	10	4	4-5-1	W2
3. CHELSEA (4)	15	28	+14	5	0	1	12	6	4	1	4	19	11	5-1-4	W1
4. ARSENAL (2)	15	27	+13	5	2	0	18	3	2	4	2	12	14	5-3-2	L1
5. LEEDS UTD (5)	15	26	+6	4	1	3	13	11	4	1	2	10	6	7-1-2	W3
6. DERBY COUNTY (8)	14	23	+8	5	2	0	17	5	2	0	5	11	15	5-2-3	W1
7. LEICESTER CITY (7)	15	23	+5	3	4	2	11	8	3	1	2	8	6	4-3-3	D1
8. LIVERPOOL (6)	14	22	+11	5	0	2	18	6	1	4	2	7	8	5-2-3	L1
9. NEWCASTLE UTD (10)	12	21	0	5	2	1	12	9	1	1	2	4	7	4-3-3	W1
10. CRYSTAL PALACE (12)	14	19	-1	0	3	3	4	9	5	1	2	10	6	3-4-3	W1
11. WIMBLEDON (9)	15	19	-2	2	2	5	10	14	3	2	1	8	6	4-2-4	L1
12. ASTON VILLA (15)	15	18	-6	3	1	3	8	12	2	2	4	7	9	4-3-3	W1
13. COVENTRY CITY (11)	15	17	-6	2	6	0	10	8	1	2	4	3	11	2-6-2	L1
14. SOUTHAMPTON (13)	15	16	-5	4	1	3	13	10	1	0	6	5	13	4-1-5	L1
15. WEST HAM UTD (14)	14	16	-6	4	0	1	10	4	1	1	7	8	20	3-0-7	L3
16. SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY (19)	15	15	-10	4	1	3	15	12	0	2	5	10	23	3-2-5	W2
17. TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR (16)	15	13	-11	3	2	3	7	8	0	2	5	4	14	1-3-6	L4
18. BOLTON WANDERERS (18)	14	13	-11	1	4	1	3	3	1	3	4	7	18	1-5-4	D1
19. BARNLEY (20)	15	13	-28	2	1	4	6	15	2	0	6	6	25	2-1-7	W1
20. EVERTON (17)	15	12	-9	3	1	3	11	11	0	2	6	5	14	2-2-6	L4

ATTACK		Goals scored		Avg	
1. Manchester Utd	36	2.40			
2. Chelsea	31	2.07			
3. Arsenal	30	2.00			
4. Derby	28	2.00			
5. Blackburn	27	1.80			
6. Liverpool	25	1.79			
7. Sheffield Wed	25	1.67			
8. Leeds	23	1.53			
9. Newcastle	16	1.33			
10. Leicester	19	1.27			
11. West Ham	18	1.27			
12. Southampton	18	1.20			
13. Wimbledon	18	1.20			
14. Everton	16	1.07			
15. Aston Villa	15	1.00			
16. Crystal Palace	14	1.00			
17. Coventry	13	0.87			
18. Barnsley	12	0.80			
19. Tottenham	11	0.73			
20. Bolton	10	0.71			

SCORING TRENDS		Goals per half		1st		2nd	
Arsenal	19	11					
Aston Villa	6	9					
Barnsley	7	5					
Blackburn	20	7					
Bolton	5	5					
Chelsea	14	17					
Coventry	6	7					
Crystal Palace	7	7					
Derby	13	15					
Everton	6	10					
Leeds Utd	14	9					
Leicester	7	12					
Liverpool	6	19					
Manchester Utd	16	20					
Newcastle	8	8					
Sheffield Wed	12	13					
Southampton	7	11					
Tottenham	6	5					
West Ham	4	14					
Wimbledon	5	13					

SCORERS		Goals	
Bergkamp (Arsenal)	10		
Sutton (Blackburn)	10		
Wright (Arsenal)	9		
Balansi (Derby)	8		
Cole (Manchester Utd)	8		
Harrison (West Ham)	8		
Carbone (Sheffield Wed)	7		
Davies (Southampton)	7		
Dubin (Coventry)	7		
Gallagher (Blackburn)	7		
Sherrington (Manchester Utd)	7		
Wallace (Leeds)	7		
Fowler (Liverpool)	6		
Wanchope (Derby)	6		
Barnes (Newcastle)	5		
Berkovic (West Ham)	5		
Cort (Wimbledon)	5		
Di Canio (Sheffield Wed)	5		
Marshall (Leicester)	5		
Speed (Everton)	5		

CAUTIONS		Cards issued		Yellow		Red	
1. Everton	33						
2. Arsenal	34						
3. Bolton	30						
4. Coventry	31						
5. C Palace	31						
6. Chelsea	31						
7. Chelsea	28						
8. West Ham	31						
9. Derby	29						
10. Sheffield Wed	26						
11. Blackburn	26						
12. Tottenham	24						
13. Southampton	25						
14. Manchester Utd	24						
15. Wimbledon	24						
16. Liverpool	22						
17. Barnsley	21						
18. Leicester	18						
19. Newcastle	17						
20. Aston Villa	16						

REFEREES		Cards issued		Yellow		Red	
1. S Dunn	5						
2. G Willard	8						
3. M Reed	5						
4. D Ellery	7						
5. P Durkin	10						
6. P Alcock	7						
7. G Ashby	8						
8. M Bodenham	7						
9. G Barber	8						
10. U Winter	9						
11. U Rennie	8						
12. G Poll	9						
13. N Barry	8						
14. M Riley	7						
15. P Jones	7						
16. K Burge	8						
17. D Gallagher	9						
18. A Wildie	8						
19. S Lodge	9						

DEFENCE		Goals conceded		Avg	
1. Manchester Utd	12	0.80			
2. Blackburn	13	0.87			
3. Leicester	14	0.93			
4. Liverpool	14	1.00			
5. Crystal Palace	15	1.07			
6. Arsenal	17	1.13			
7. Chelsea	17	1.13			
8. Leicester	17	1.13			
9. Coventry	17	1.13			
10. Newcastle	18	1.33			
11. Wimbledon	20	1.33			
12. Aston Villa	21	1.40			
13. Derby	20	1.43			
14. Tottenham	22	1.47			
15. Bolton	21	1.50			
16. Southampton	23	1.53			
17. West Ham	24	1.60			
18. Everton	25	1.79			
19. Sheffield Wed	25	2.33			
20. Barnsley	40	2.67			

CLEAN SHEETS		Clean sheet		Failed to score	
Arsenal	8				
Aston Villa	4				
Barnsley	3				
Blackburn	7				
Bolton	5				
Chelsea	6				
Coventry	5				
Crystal Palace	4				
Derby	3				
Leicester	3				
Leeds Utd	4				
Liverpool	4				
Manchester Utd	8				
Newcastle	4				
Sheffield Wed	4				
Southampton	3				
Tottenham	4				
West Ham	1				
Wimbledon	2				

HOME		
Attendance	Average	% full
Arsenal	37,984	99%
Aston Villa	35,925	91%
Barnsley	18,419	100%
Blackburn	23,952	76%
Bolton	24,138	97%
Chelsea	32,745	98%
Coventry	18,928	80%
Crystal Palace	22,166	84%
Derby	24,293	81%
Everton	35,421	88%
Leeds	34,982	87%
Leicester	20,225	94%
Liverpool	36,691	97%
Manchester Utd	55,122	88%
Norwich	36,706	100%
Sheffield Wad	25,726	85%
Southampton	15,185	95%
Tottenham	28,196	79%
West Ham	25,905	97%
Wimbledon	17,010	65%

SAILING

Girl power provides education for Dutch

FROM EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT
IN FREMANTLE

THE last two boats in the Whitbread Round the World Race fleet reached here early yesterday separated by little more than an hour, the all-women crew aboard *EF Education* showing the men in *Brunel* the route to the finish.

It has been a respectable performance by the women, whose skipper, Christine Guillo, of France, gave a warning in Cape Town before the start of the leg that heavy running conditions in the Southern Ocean would make it harder for them to compete.

In the event, they did not experience more than 35 knots, which offered an opportunity to beat Hans Bouscholte and his crew and give Grant Dalton, in *Merit Cup*, who finished just 7½ hours in front of them, a run for his money.

The Dutch, seemingly outclassed, are beginning to realise that the best they can do is play catch-up. Bouscholte said: "The other competitors have done a lot of two-boat optimising — we didn't. Maybe we are not as progressed."

Stuart Quarrie, of Great Britain, who joined the boat as navigator in Cape Town, provided a revealing insight into the tactical and navigational realities of a race that is producing wild swings of fortune. He said: "These boats are so different in boatspeed when you get one or two knots more breeze that if you are conservative and somebody gets a tiny bit more, they are gone and you never catch up. You have to take risks."

Almost all the boats are out of the water at the Fremantle Sailing Club, as the shore crews working through jobs in preparation for the third leg of 2,250 miles head for Sydney on December 13.

Gunnar Krantz, skipper of *Svein*, said, meanwhile, announced that Matt Humphreys, of Great Britain, who joined as a driver in Cape Town, will remain on board for the rest of the race.

Tour rivals fear backlash at Wembley after New Zealand fall short of high expectations

Wales pinpoint weaknesses in All Black armour

BY MARK SOUSTER

ANOTHER week, another football stadium and another step on New Zealand's northern-hemisphere odyssey, as well as an important staging post for Wales on their road back to respectability. For the All Blacks last week it was Old Trafford and England, today it is Wembley and Wales at a venue that stages a rugby union international for only the second time. It is an historic setting, a stage on which players can either freeze or flourish.

History is stacked against Wales. They have not beaten New Zealand since 1953 and have only won three times in all. The match today, however, the seventeenth between two nations of rich rugby heritage, has the potential to befit the occasion, with both teams wedded to the idea of running, swashbuckling rugby. New Zealand feel they still have something to prove, while Wales are keen to eat at rugby's high table once again.

Wembley's sense of history is all-embracing as Nigel Walker, the Wales left wing,

who in the past seven days have found themselves unnecessarily distracted by cheating allegations and two performances that, by their unforfeiting standards, fell short of expectation.

Within the Wales camp there is a hard-headed realism about what lies in store in front of a capacity 72,000 crowd this afternoon, a realism brought about by the experience of players such as Scott Gibbs and Allan Bateman. Gibbs knows better than most what lies in store.

"Most people now realise that it's no good trying simply to defend against sides as good as New Zealand. That will certainly be the case at Wembley because when I have played there in rugby league the pitch seems to be 80 yards wide. Their back three are so good that we have to be aware of their threat," Gibbs said.

His fellow centre, Bateman, feels Wales have found chinks in the All Blacks armour. "They are a great side but we have targeted a couple of areas of weakness, which we will be trying to expose," he said. "It all depends on how much ball we win."

"If we can get enough possession, then we have got much more potential in the back line than England. I am sure we can pose them a lot more problems than England did at Old Trafford."

"I am sure our coaches will be looking just as much at the Welsh performance as the result, but for all the players it is the result that matters."

"It could be a fantastic game, but if we get beaten by 60 points we are not going to be happy. But we won't mind if it's a draw game and we win by penalties."

"Mike Catt did not have one of his best games with the boot against New Zealand last week, but I am sure they will be very wary of Neil's [Jenkins] kicking ability. They will not want to infringe too much knowing what Neil could do to them, so hopefully that will allow us to get a lot more possession from off the foot."



New Zealand are great admirers of Howley, the Wales scrum half, who is champing at the bit. Photograph: Neil Munns

for such players and privately of the damage they can cause. He knows that Howley is champing at the bit, while Jenkins will not be as forgiving as Catt last week.

The problem for Wales will be providing sufficient ball for their backs to wreak some kind of havoc, while also being able to maintain their defensive shape for 80 minutes. That is why, during the build-

up this week, attention has been focused solely on the forward effort in the knowledge that the backs can live with anybody.

"We will have to battle hard for an hour and then try to step it up in the last 20 minutes. I feel concentration has been lacking a bit in the sides that have so far played New Zealand, although a lot of that is because they get

fatigued by the end," Gibbs said.

Wales know too that New Zealand are their own worst critics. "Not once this year have we reached the benchmark we set ourselves," Craig Dowd, the prop, said this week. They are determined to right the wrongs and go through 1997 unbeaten in their 12 internationals. Wales have been warned.

WALES	NEW ZEALAND
K A Morgan (Pontypridd)	15 C M Cullen (Manawatu)
G Thomas (Bridgend)	14 J W Wilson (Otago)
A G Bateman (Richmond)	13 F E Buncie (North Harbour)
I S Gibbs (Swansea)	12 W K Little (North Harbour)
N K Walker (Cardiff)	11 J T Loma (Counties)
N R Jenkins (Pontypridd)	10 A P Mearns (Canterbury)
R Howley (Cardiff)	9 J W Marshall (Canterbury)
C D Loader (Swansea)	8 J W Dowd (Auckland)
S M Williams (Richmond)	7 M J Hewitt (Southland)
D Young (Cardiff)	6 O M Brown (Auckland)
G O Lewis (Hawke's Bay)	5 I D Jones (North Harbour)
M J Voyke (Llanelli)	4 R M Brooke (Auckland)
R C Appleby (Swansea)	3 T G Randall (Otago)
R G Jones (Cardiff)	2 J A Kromfield (Otago)
N Thomas (Bath)	1 Z V Brooke (Auckland)

Referee: W J Erickson (Australia)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 S J McLeod (Wales), 17 J P Preston (Wales), 18 A F Blowers (Auckland), 19 C C Riechmann (Auckland), 20 M R Allen (Manawatu), 21 S B T Fitzpatrick (Auckland)

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South Africa offer chance for players to make amends

There are still reasons to be cheerful after defeat by the All Blacks exposed weaknesses that need to be addressed

Last week, when we went into the first game against New Zealand at Old Trafford, only four members of the England side had experience of playing against — and beating — the All Blacks. Today, double that number can recall how South Africa played against the Lions during the summer and that should help us at Twickenham.

Nevertheless, on their tour of France, the Springboks showed a lot more flexibility and their players seem to have a confidence that was lacking last summer. They are a wounded animal so far as British rugby is concerned and will be hungry to avenge the series defeat by the Lions and reaffirm that they are back in business. They will be aware that the All Blacks will be watching, only a few miles away.

Nobody in the England squad is under any illusions about the need to win. Winning is paramount at this level and we are realistic about what happened at Old Trafford. We have improved, but there is a long way to go on the other hand, we are confident that we have the talent to make the quantum leap,

not just to match New Zealand but to overtake them.

The mood last Saturday was one of disappointment, however the press may have reported it, and even though some people may have left the stadium mildly satisfied. We lost by 17 points, were outscored by three tries to one and created relatively few scoring chances of our own. That's the stark truth, so we had little to celebrate and that is not why we went round the pitch afterwards on what has been described as a "lap of honour".

That was a gesture of thanks to the people in Manchester. We had talked in the dressing-room beforehand about the fact that no rugby union international had been played there for 100 years and we felt that it was important to thank the supporters for the atmosphere

they created, which was unique in our experience. Even in trying circumstances, with the team trailing by 17 points, they had stuck with us and we needed to show our appreciation — on that evidence, it won't be the last game played at Old Trafford, either.

I would also add that I believe New Zealand to be a beatable side. Perhaps we have become hung up in the mythology of the All Blacks, that they are the world's best team and that their midweek side is the world's second-best team, which did not look to be the case in Bristol last Tuesday. We learnt an expensive lesson at Old Trafford, particularly when they hit us with two quick scores in the first half, which clearly demonstrated we were committing too many men to the rucks and mauls.

We have a tendency in this

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



country to play with our heads down in defence, rather than looking at what the opposition are doing. When they move ball swiftly from the point of contact and you find players such as the Brooke brothers and Ian Jones

standing out in the backs, clearly they have been able to clear possession with fewer players. The difference between the All Blacks and the rest is that, when they apply pressure, they maintain it. There were long periods when we did apply pressure to them and that was part of the reason I chose to kick some penalties to touch in their 22, rather than at goal: at those particular moments, it was important to keep the momentum going, to turn the screw and try to achieve the maximum number of points available. That our pressure did not result in points is something we can deal with, we can explore different ways of ramming home the advantage, whether it be in three points, five or seven.

I was interested to hear John Hart, the New Zealand coach, say afterwards that his team played as they had trained in their last session before Old Trafford. Clearly, he was dissatisfied at the quality of that session, which, as they won by 17 points, is an indication of what is required if we are to lift our own standards: our own training on Tuesday, there-

fore, was extremely demanding, both physically and mentally.

Since we lost three players injured from the match today — Kyran Bracken, Tony Diprose and Phil de Glanville — it may also have sounded expensive, but there has been a cumulative effect upon bodies in this intense series of matches. You have to train as you

stepping up a level and, although South Africa have players such as Henry Honiball who offer an obvious threat, I believe that the players we have pose similar problems for them.

We will go into the match without Martin Johnson, after his one-match suspension. Martin is a world-class player, one of the best locks in international rugby with first-hand experience of playing against — and beating — South Africa. All I will say is that the whole squad wants to be involved in a clean game, that the team management has looked at the incident with Justin Marshall and taken the appropriate action swiftly; that has been important, that decisions are made for or against rather than being allowed to drift and create uncertainty.

We have to see this as an opportunity for Danny Grewcock, who has trained well and shows a passion to play for England. That is what this series is about, assessing which players can succeed against the best and Danny has no bigger stage than against the holders of the World Cup.

'I believe New Zealand to be a beatable side'

England's lack of experience weighs heavily

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE prospect of two crowds, each in excess of 70,000, assembling to watch international rugby union being played within a dozen miles of each other is at once exhilarating and alarming. Exhilarating that rugby can attract such capacity numbers at Twickenham and Wembley this afternoon; alarming that such high-profile matches should be fighting for attention at the same time.

But then, forward planning has not been a feature of the game's administration during the birth of the professional game these past two years. However, the players whom so many spectators have come to see have been swept up in the madcap dash of which November has become.

During this past fortnight's international extravaganza there has been only one change in the global rankings: New Zealand, who play Wales at Wembley, have confirmed their superiority, but South Africa have edged ahead of England, whom they meet at Twickenham. Indeed, the Springboks are closing down on France in terms of results since the 1995 World Cup and victory this afternoon would restore them to second place and affirm their traditional rivalry with the All Blacks.

It is a victory they must be favoured to achieve in the Nike international, despite the political and playing problems that littered the first half of the southern-hemisphere season. England, for all the encouragement that they have justifiably derived from their recent matches with New Zealand and Australia, are long on enthusiasm but desperately short of experience — even shorter, now, for the loss through suspension of Martin Johnson and through injury of Phil de Glanville.

Only three of their players have reached double figures in terms of international appearances: contrast that with the experience available to the British Isles during their tour of South Africa last summer, when they won the series by the skin of Jeremy Guscott's dropped goal in Durban against a South Africa side at odds with itself. If the Springboks have achieved anything over the past month it is the restoration of confidence and, even if they choose to regard



ENGLAND'S AUTUMN CHALLENGE

the 52-10 dismissal of France last Saturday as a fond aberration, it goes a long way to balancing England's home advantage.

"I think I have got selection right," Nick Mallett said, using his words carefully. The utter frustration Mallett must have felt while South Africa snubbed from crisis to crisis earlier this year can hardly be imagined. Now that he is coach he has moved Percy Montgomery from centre to wing to centre, introduced the inventive Dick Muir at centre, restored Adrian Garvey to prop and assured Henry Honiball that he is a world-class fly half.

The response has been evident in Italy and France, but Mallett recognises today as the biggest hurdle of his first months in office. Success at Twickenham, where South Africa have played on only seven occasions in 84 years, losing in 1969 and 1992, would be affirmation of his playing policy.

Roger Uttley, the England

manager, shrugged off his team's lack of experience. "It's only a concern in terms of the amount of preparation the boys have had," he said. Yet the England fight forwards have still to repair the damage wrought in South Africa, when as Lions they found themselves bypassed by their Celtic cousins.

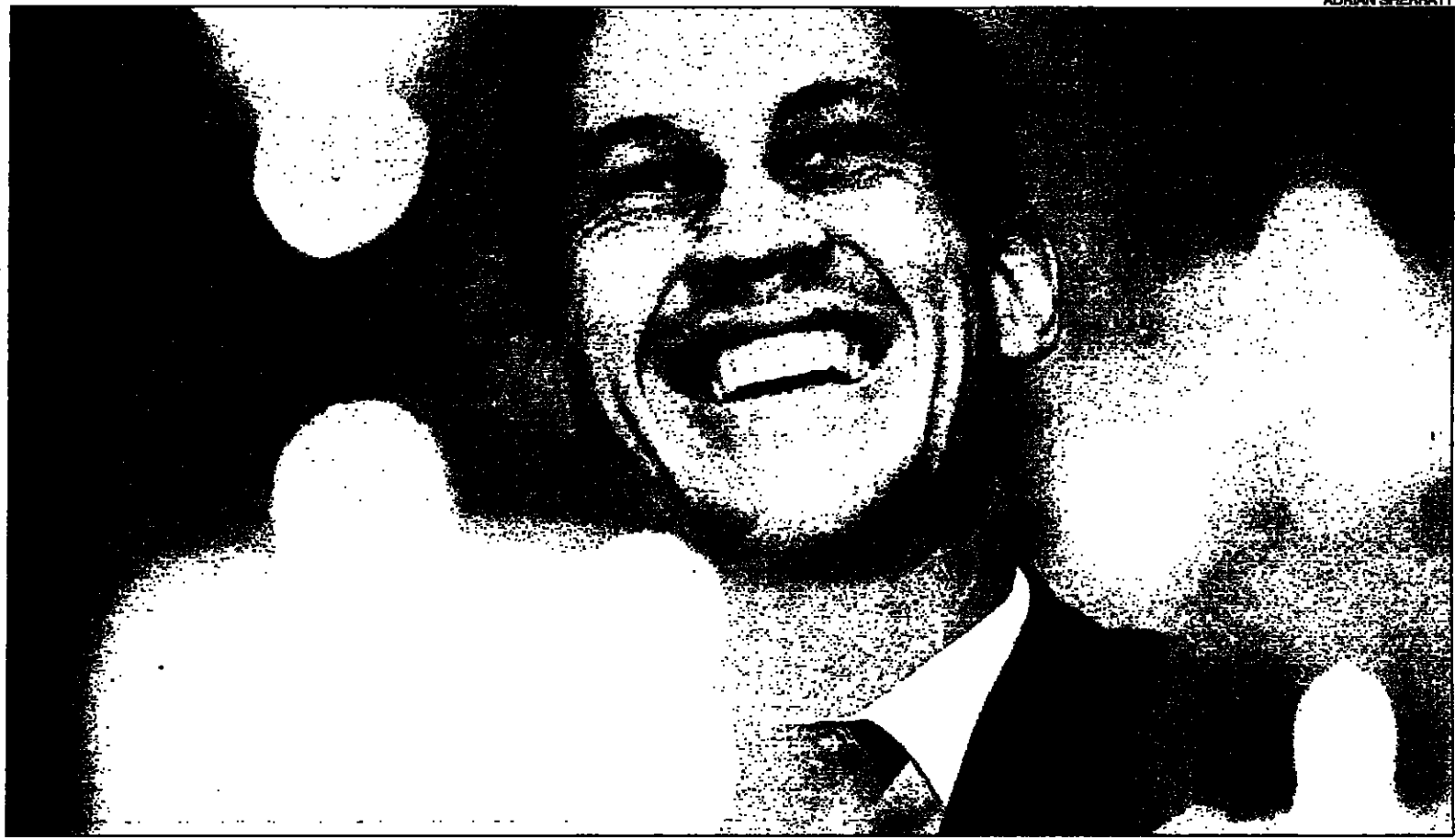
An encouraging display against New Zealand a week ago has been undermined by the loss of Johnson, though Danny Grewcock, 25, has an unparalleled opportunity to make his mark at lock. It will be his first game at the stadium. Matthew Dawson is even more eager to resume his international career against the least experienced player in the South Africa XV, Werner Swanepoel.

The Northampton scrum half became the linchpin of the Lions, but gave way to Kyran Bracken earlier this month. Now he has the chance to feed the midfield of Mike Catt and Will Greenwood that, allied to the perceptive support play and speed of Neil Back, proved the making of the Lions' midweek XV. Indeed, Back is regarded by the South Africans as the player who may undo many of their plans, such is their regard for his pace to the breakdown.

Yesterday, the Rugby Football Union called for immediate talks with BSkyB, the satellite television company part-owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, to resolve payment issues relating to the five-year contract signed last year.

ENGLAND		SOUTH AFRICA	
M B Perry (Bath)	15	P C Montgomery (Western Prov)	
J Bentley (Newcastle)	14	J F Small (Western Province)	
W J H Greenwood (Leicester)	13	A H Snyman (N Transvaal)	
N J J Greenstock (Wasps)	12	D J Muir (Western Prov)	
D L Ross (Sale)	11	P W G Rossouw (Western Prov)	
M J Catt (Bath)	10	H W Honiball (Natal)	
M J S Dawson (Northampton)	9	W Swanepoel (Free State)	
J Leonard (Harlequins)	1	J P du Randt (Free State)	
R Cockcroft (Leicester)	2	J Dalton (Gauteng)	
D J Garforth (Leicester)	3	A C Garvey (Natal)	
D J Grewcock (Saracens)	4	K Otto (Northern Transvaal)	
G S Archer (Newcastle)	6	M G Andrews (Natal)	
L B N Dallaglio (Wasps)*	6	A D Aitken (Western Province)	
N A Back (Leicester)	7	A G Venter (Free State)	
R A Hall (Saracens)	8	G H Telchmann (Natal)*	
*Captain		*Captain	
Referee: C J Hawke (New Zealand)		REPLACEMENTS: 16 J Swart (Western Province), 27 J H de Beer (Free State), 18 D van Zyl (Mpumalanga), 19 R B Skinstad (Western Province), 20 W Meyer (Free State), 21 A E Drost (Free State)	
REPLACEMENTS: 16 P J Grayson (Northampton), 17 A S Healey (Leicester), 18 C M A Sheehy (Wasps), 19 S D Shaw (Wasps), 20 G C Rowntree (Leicester), 21 M P Regan (Bath)			

Rebel wing's long and winding road to respectability leads to Twickenham



Small, the explosive South Africa wing, is intensely proud of the rugby heritage of his country. "I have huge respect for the colours," he said

Let us paint the faces of James Small. Holder of the record number of appearances for South Africa — the first South African to be sent off in an international. One short of the record of international tries by a South African — agent provocateur throughout his career. Male model — night-climbing, party-guy at the cost of his Springbok place.

Let us try again: Small, the toast of a rugby-mad nation. Small, the man of soul and man of business. Small, the chairman of a disciplinary committee? No, that last is absolutely true. Small, the senior player of the South Africa party that comes to Twickenham today to play England, chairs the squad's internal disciplinary committee and even he can scarcely suppress a chuckle.

"I'm growing old in a dignified manner," he said, and burst out laughing at the thought. "Maybe it's because I've experienced both sides of it. People change every day." At 28, Small believes himself to be on the "doorstep of the best rugby of my career". Why has it taken him so long? He erupted on to the international stage in 1992, when South Africa were readmitted to international competition, scored eight tries in seven appearances but his talent was somehow submerged in the image of the young rebel.

Small himself admitted that he plays up to the role because

Looking behind the Small faces

it is good for business, but you suspect that only now has he managed to achieve an element of control. That has to do with the passing of the years, with a degree of personal contentment with his life in Cape Town, his birthplace, but it has also to do with the febrile nature of South African society and South African rugby during his ascent towards manhood.

You love him or loath him. The British Isles inclined towards the latter emotion in South Africa last summer, notably after a tense encounter between Small and John Bentley when the Lions played Western Province in Cape Town. Bentley spent the afternoon needling Small, there was an altercation and later Small accused his opposite number of eye-gouging. The charge was swiftly denied but the two wings appear again today, although not in direct opposition.

He was raised in Johannesburg, where he played rugby and football; his father, Vernon, won Springbok colours in

DAVID HANDS



1956 at inside left. "The football side I played with used to kick each other as much as the ball," he said. "It was a very bad team but it was difficult in those days for a young white kid to get anywhere in the game. There was no discipline, no team structure, everyone screaming at each

other — looking back, that may be where some of my temperament came from."

Small made his international debut on the wing against New Zealand at Ellis Park but a year later made different headlines when he was sent off for verbal abuse during an international in Australia. In 1994 he was cited for a dangerous tackle in New Zealand and withdrawn from the party that visited Scotland and Wales after becoming involved in a nightclub fracas.

In 1996 he still courted controversy and was dropped from an international with New Zealand for breaking the team curfew. "I'm growing up as a man now, my temperament has changed accordingly and I feel I've carried myself well this year — though there are still two games to go," he said.

"I don't look back. Playing rugby for South Africa is a hell of an honour for me, something I hold dear. I have huge respect for the colours I wear. It was through sport I could make something of myself. I

wasn't a great scholar. I'm not a well-educated man — there have been incidents along the way, some of which have been blown up out of proportion, but it's also worked for me.

"You always experience hardship in life but I'm the one who bounced back and that's why people at home appreciate me. They see the fighting spirit. The fact that I'm 100 per cent committed to the causes in my life is why people enjoy me. They tell me not to change, that they love the way I am and that's why they come to watch rugby."

"Making my life in Cape Town has been a driving force — I'm at peace there. I have a lovely apartment where I can watch the sun go down over the mountain. It's a very European place. I love the human contact — I can sit in my coffee shop in St George's Mall and talk to the Cape Coloured people, who are very aware of rugby and have a hell of a sense of humour."

"I love my country. I'd never leave my country. The best moment of my life was the bus journey we made round Johannesburg after we had won the World Cup, millions on the streets celebrating. It wasn't just for the three million white people but, like Francois Pienaar said, for the 43 million people. I watched an interview with Liam Gallagher, from Oasis, the other night — he said he'd rather be a footnoter than a footnote. I thought that was pretty apt."



ENGLAND V'S SOUTH AFRICA

SAT 29TH NOVEMBER 4.15PM

ON TV

AS IT SHOULD BE

ITV 3

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Final furlong for a true thoroughbred

Peter O'Sullivan, racing commentator supreme, will lay down his microphone for the last time today

People always marvel at the sheer professionalism of Sir Peter O'Sullivan. I can't for the life of me think why. Now it happens that, for reasons best known to itself, *The Times* has asked me to review a book called *Pirelli Calendar Classics*. It is on the floor as I write. I have not the slightest doubt that Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell have the quality of professionalism in overplus. But it is not the first thing that strikes you.

O'Sullivan calls his last race at Newbury this afternoon. He will not make any jokes. He will not make any errors. He will not add any verbal colour at all, but once he has gone, it will seem as if all BBC racing is in monochrome.

He is now in his eightieth year. He has broadcast, on radio or television, on 50 Grand Nationals, 50 Royal Ascots, 50 Goodwood, nice round figures. And something will go out of racing, out of sport, out of popular culture, with this stepping-down.

O'Sullivan represents a genius heading for extinction. He is the voice of his sport. To hear such a voice is (or was) to know exactly where you are, and why. Other members of this genus include John Arlott, in cricket, Dan Maskell, in tennis, Eddie Waring, in rugby league. Others, still living but no longer active, include David Coleman, in track and field, and, perhaps, Kenneth Wolstenholme in football.

I doubt if the genus will survive much longer. Modern

SIMON BARNES Talking horse

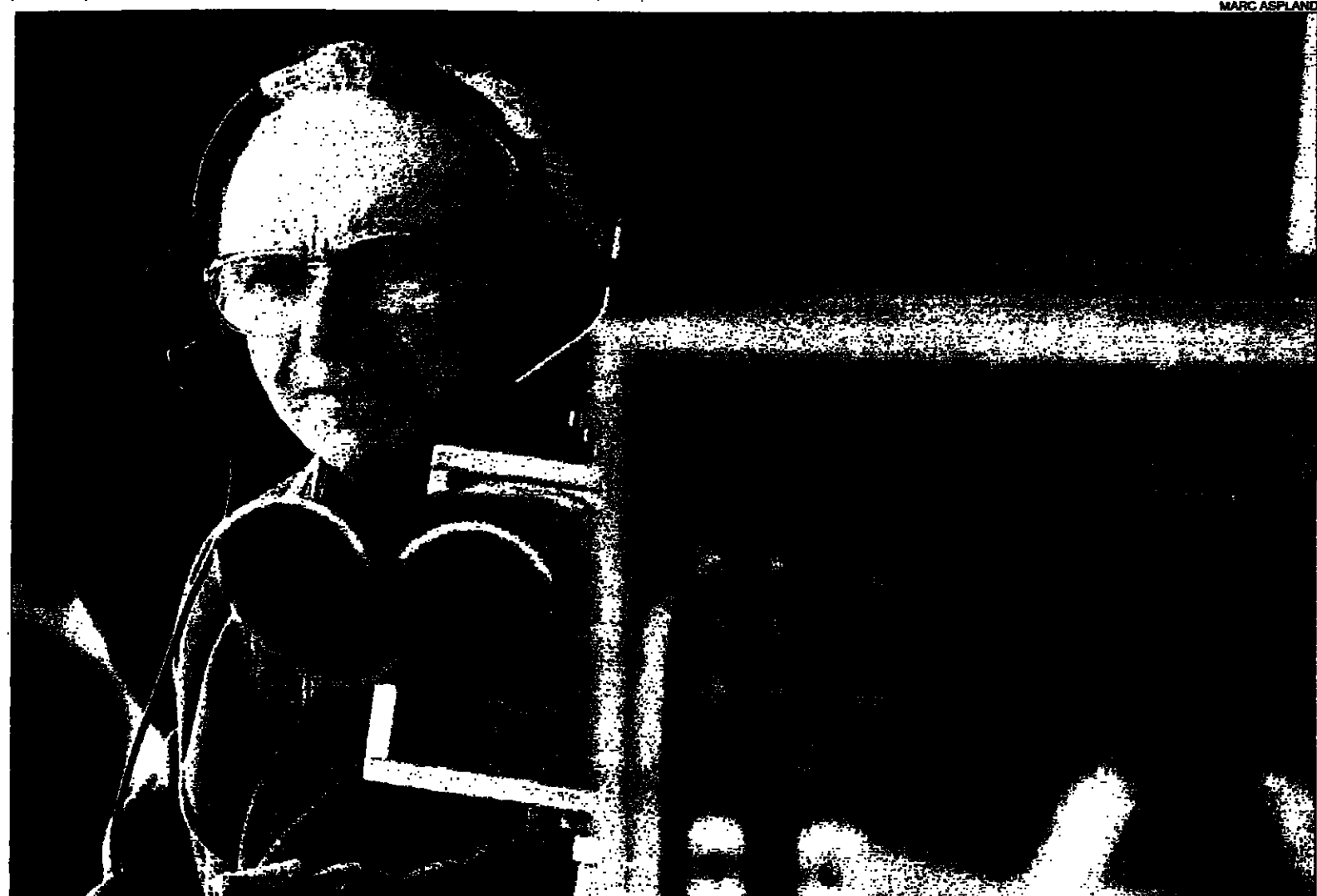
O'Sullivan steps down in this year of, as it were, the golden wedding between himself and the viewer and listener. And people will pay due respect to his professionalism, to his ability to pull off the difficult feat of reading a race, remembering all the jockeys' colours and all the names of all the horses.

It is indeed jolly difficult, and I couldn't begin to do it, but a lot of people can. And professionalism isn't exactly unique to O'Sullivan. Professionalism is a minimum expectation. I expect most of us are decent professionals in our way: professionalism is really only absence of vice.

No, the point about O'Sullivan is not his professionalism. It is simply this: love. The reason he possessed the ability to call every race, from the humblest seller to the Grand National, as if it were a matter of all-absorbing interest, was because it was a matter of all-absorbing interest. And you can't fake that.

Every race really is, for the minutes of its running, a matter of fascination. The quiet cannot help that quiet relish that is always in his voice as they come under starter's orders, simply cannot help the rise in pitch as the favourite takes it up with a hundred yards to go.

"I'm mad about it," O'Sullivan said. "I'm mad about the principal players. And although I'm a punter, the horses always come first." Every single race is a matter of earth-shattering importance — at least, it is for some of his audience. Some of these will lose money and a few will win. O'Sullivan knows — knows from hard-won experience — that it matters. "It's all very well for Murray Walker to make cracks and gaffes," O'Sullivan said. "The motor-racing audience doesn't have a pecuniary involvement." He



O'Sullivan calling the horses from the BBC position at Aintree, where he has seen some of his sport's most dramatic moments unfold

has the respect for a punter that you can only really find in a punter.

A race-reader must be something of the automaton. I was always convinced that the Extel Blower's announcements, before the days of betting-shop television, were made by a Dalek. It was O'Sullivan's triumph to combine such impersonal efficiency with the warmth of an all-too-human punter.

In truth, the myth of O'Sullivan as the world's most fearless punter is somewhat off the pace. "I don't want to sound clever. I've always bet far too much, far more than I should," he says himself as a cautious punter — and certainly not a gambler, who must bet on every race.

O'Sullivan relishes best the ante-post bet, the taste of the good thing, spotted in humble surroundings, that will soar to ever-greater heights. Or not, of course. The romance of the business has never left him. And he has, times without number, commented with his usual impassioned accuracy on races that have carried his money to triumph and disaster, and his voice, always warm, always rising, treating the two imposters just the same.

He managed that, even when he owned the winner himself. And he would murder, almost swallow the line. Attivo, owned by Peter O'Sullivan, trained by... I reminded him of the glorious Michael Bentine record of the football announcer winning

the pools and he chuckled — he is one of the few men who can chuckle — for a long time in relish of all the terrible things he didn't do when Attivo, when he was friendly, strutted their stuff.

In fact, half the tape of our meeting is about Attivo. Which is not really much use to anybody. I have a long series of stories about a terrific horse that was greatly loved. It was, I suppose, rather unprofessional of me to let him run on about how he bought the dam and bred the colt. "And they said you've got a right little corker here and, if he only grows a little, you'll be able to run him at the White City."

But the fact is, such horse tales are the breath of life to

those who love talking horse. And, contrary to popular wisdom, hearing them is almost as good as telling them. Like love stories, every horse tale is the same, and every one is unique. Never mind how a remembers all those different coloured shirts: the love story of O'Sullivan and Attivo is what counts.

"And he won the Daily Express Triumph Hurdle, imagine that, a race sponsored by the newspaper I worked for, and having to make that rather narcissistic announcement at the end." And he still called every horse home from first to last, without going Michael Bentine. He has a runner, Sounds Pyne, at Newbury this afternoon: even if it wins, and I hope it does, the usual professionalism will

be in place: even if it loses, the warmth of love will still sound in his voice.

He does not plan to shut up completely. He will continue his campaign for something called the air-cushion whip, a device that does not damage the animals. He will also campaign against the live export of horses. Three cheers from this column for both those things.

The pattern runs straight and true, you see. Mad about it. Mad about the game. Above all, mad about horses. From the first pony, best and only friend of an only child, to every horse that has ever run under his assessing eye, he has been mad about them all. Never mind the professionalism. In the end, it is only love that counts.

Dublin Flyer's lonely return

BY CHRIS McGRATH

IT IS not the way he should be remembered. The Newbury crowd had turned their backs to the course, their walk to the winner's enclosure animated by the drama they had witnessed in the closing stages of the Jack O'Connell Handicap Chase yesterday.

Challenger Du Luc had confirmed himself fearful of open spaces, his resolve failing the moment he took charge from a labouring Callisroe Bay; his rival had retrieved the lead on the post. But if Challenger Du Luc was glad of the company, rarely can Dublin Flyer have been so lonely.

The darling of so many greater occasions, Dublin Flyer had — for the third race in succession — looked a shadow of old. Few steeplechasers in recent years have tackled adversity with such enthusiasm, whether the fences them

HAYDOCK

THUNDERER
1.05 Northern Claiming Hurdle (2,120: 2m 4f) (11 runners)
1. 2404 SHARON 21 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
2. 2141 TOTALLY TRUE 21 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
3. 1201 CRY BABY 24 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
4. 31-1 THE OPERATOR 18 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
5. 60-1 MISTY GRY 23 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
6. 629 TEXAS SCRAMBLE 28 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
7. 24-5 NADAM 17 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
8. 10-1 MISTY FIELD 10 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
9. 5-10 FIVE AND FANCY 35 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
10. 11-1 MISTY FIELD 10 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
11. 10-1 MISTY FIELD 10 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson

2.40 VICTOR NOVICES HURDLE

(2,580: 2m 4f) (8)
1. 1111 MISTY SHORE 12 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
2. 49-4 SOUTHERN DUNSTON 13 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
3. 4-10 CHEF CHIEF 18 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
4. 3-10 SPICE TRUCKER 13 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
5. 90-1 BELANDER 27 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
6. 10-1 MISTY SHORE 12 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
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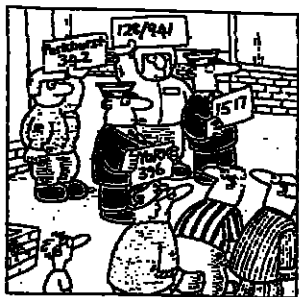
3.10 MAKERFIELD NOVICES CHASE

(2,570: 2m) (6)
1. 49-1 OUR MAN MAN 12 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
2. 10-1 ROBBIE PRIDE 11 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
3. 10-1 SPICE TRUCKER 13 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
4. 24-1 THE SECRET GRY 23 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
5. 2-10 SPICE TRUCKER 13 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson
6. 2-10 SPICE TRUCKER 13 (D) M Pige 5-11-12 L. Johnson

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Newbury
Going: good to soft (chase course; soft hurdles)
1.00 (2m 110yd hds) 1. RAINWATCH (A) P. McJannet, 2-5 fav; 2. KILLER LAD (A) P. McJannet, 2-5 fav; 3. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 4. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 5. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 6. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 7. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 8. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 9. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 10. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 11. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 12. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 13. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 14. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 15. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 16. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 17. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 18. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 19. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 20. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 21. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 22. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 23. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 24. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 25. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 26. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 27. BERTON (C) L. Johnson, 2-5 fav; 28. 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THE SECTION FOR CARS, BIKES, BOATS AND EVERYONE ON THE MOVE



Serving time in a petrol station

Page 47



Power punch of a Mini reborn

Page 47



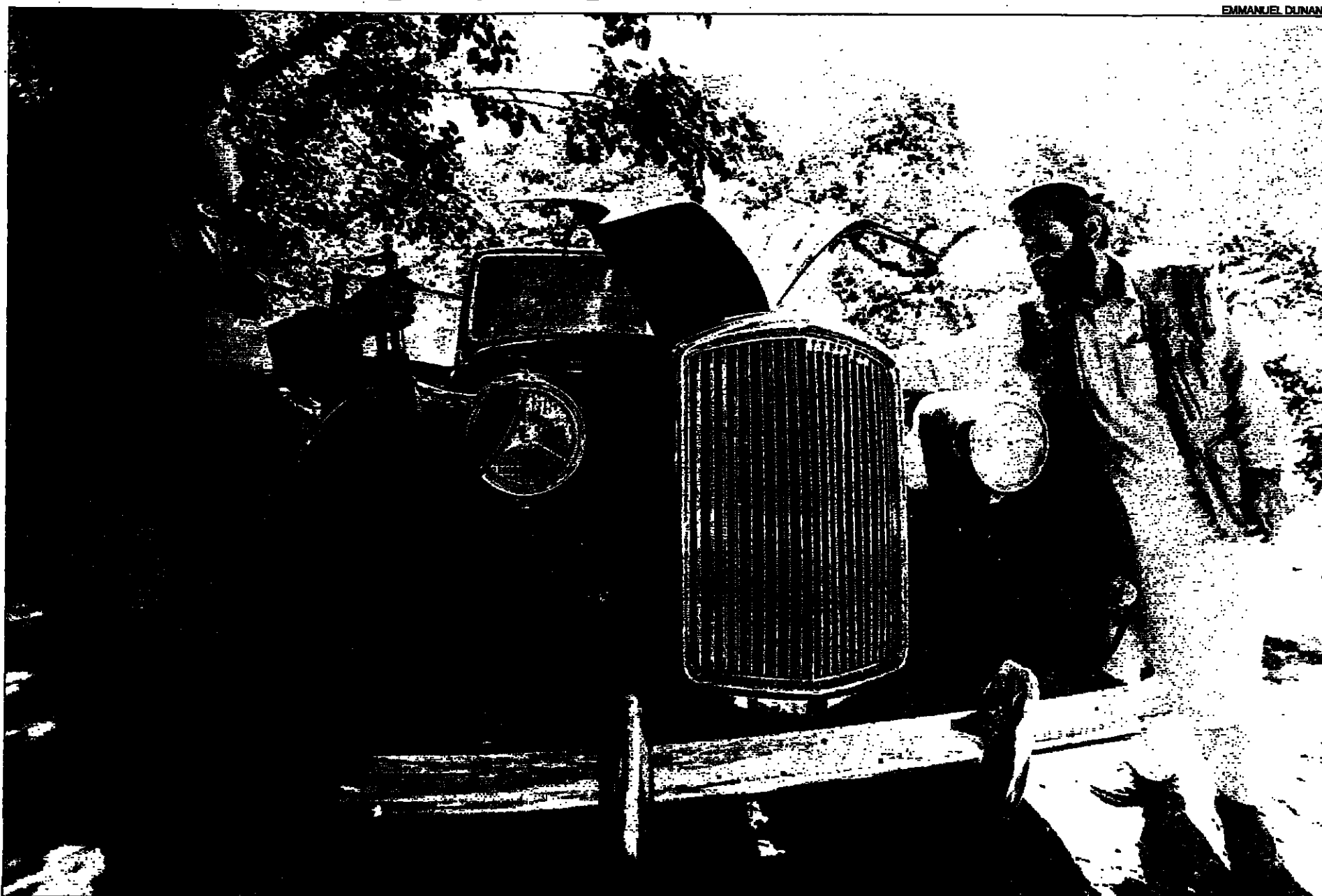
Quest to recycle any old bikes

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SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 1997

A kingly gift lost in a war zone



Wheels half sunk in mud, a "priceless" piece of Afghan heritage stands under a mulberry tree in the Panjshir Valley — but is it the car that symbolised the country's freedom?

Michael Dynes hunts the Rolls-Royce George V gave to the ruler of Afghanistan

We had set off in search of one of the great myths of Afghanistan. A Rolls-Royce, which George V reputedly gave to King Amanullah to mark the country's independence from Britain's sphere of influence in 1919, was rumoured to be hidden in the remote Panjshir Valley.

Bouncing about in an old Russian "jeep", whose rudimentary suspension had seen better days, we braced ourselves for what we knew would be a long and bruising journey in the blistering 47 degree heat up the narrow and precarious valley dirt road.

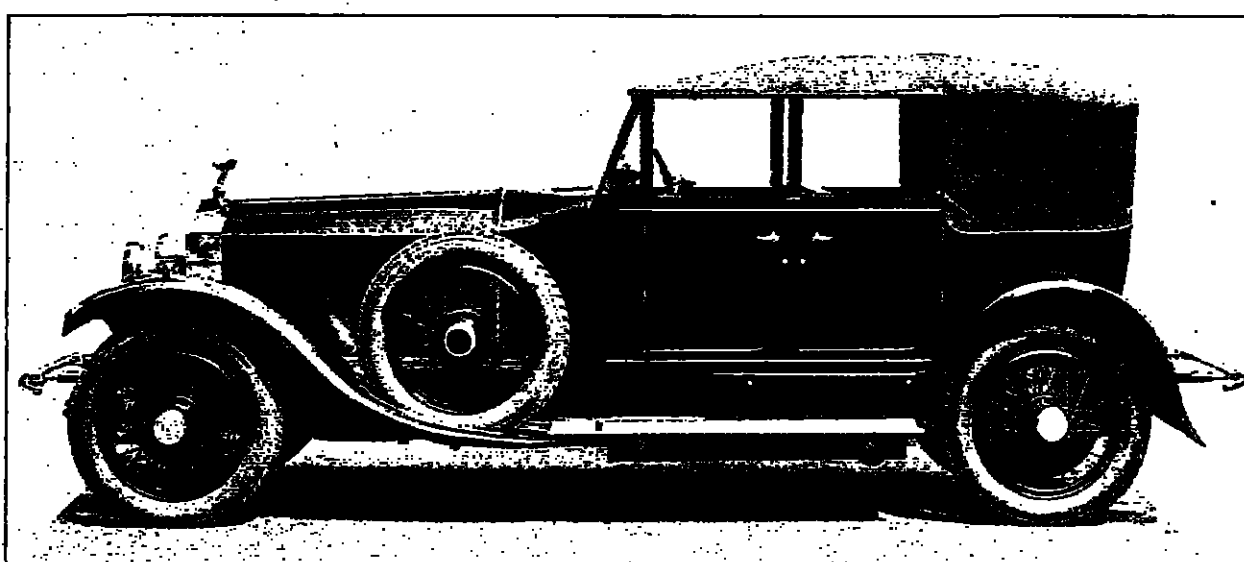
Our small group of one British reporter, a French photographer, a female stringer for Voice of America, a Tajik interpreter and a veteran Mujahidin driver who kept his Kalashnikov next to him in the door compartment, seemed oddly out of place.

Forty miles to the south, on the vast battlefield north of Kabul, wild-eyed Mujahidin fighters and fundamentalist

Taliban militia men were preoccupied with their usual afternoon rocket duels. Daud Wahab, our Tajik translator, could not believe what we were doing. "There's a war going on, and what are we doing?" he kept muttering to himself, adding in his best upper-class English accent: "Looking for a bloody Rolls-Royce."

But this was no ordinary Rolls-Royce. For the people of this war-torn country it had come to symbolise their freedom from foreign domination at a time when a rag-tag army of Mujahidin fighters, led by Ahmed Shah Masood, was trying to expel the Pakistani-backed Taliban militia from the capital.

During his coronation address, King Amanullah provoked war by declaring his country's "total independence" from Britain. A series of skirmishes followed between an ineffective Afghan army and an exhausted British Indian Army before a peace treaty



A Rolls-Royce Phantom I with Barker cabriolet bodywork — what King Amanullah's vanished car should look like

recognising Afghanistan's independence was signed at Rawalpindi in August 1919.

George V gave King Amanullah the Rolls-Royce during his visit to London in 1928. Having returned to Afghanistan armed with radical ideas of educational reform and the emancipation of women, Amanullah outraged the reactionary mullahs, provoked a tribal revolt and was forced to flee Kabul in the

Rolls-Royce in 1929. Prized as a gift from one fighting nation to another, it has since been driven by every Afghan leader until the Soviet Union's lightning invasion in 1979, after which it was found a retirement home in the Kabul museum.

When the black-bearded Taliban zealots were on the threshold of capturing the capital in September 1996, Commander Masood took the precaution of loading the Rolls on to a lorry and spurring it

away to a secret destination. It has not been seen since.

Stopping for tea at Commander Masood's mud-walled house in the Panjshir Valley, Dr Abdullah, the Commander's spokesman, said that he knew where the car was hidden and would be happy to write a letter granting us authorisation to travel further up the valley to see it.

Again we set off in search of our grail. The further we went, the worse the dirt track be-

came. Giant potholes, which only a four-wheel drive could negotiate, slowed us to a snail's pace. Our jeep balanced precariously on the narrow road which clung to the side of the mountain, while our mad Mujahidin driver played chicken with the rock-falls as they crashed on to the road from above.

Fifty miles up the valley, we caught our first glimpse of a stately car. Sitting forlornly under a mulberry tree in the

THE ROYAL CONNECTION

King Amanullah's enthusiasm for Rolls-Royces knew no bounds. In 1927 he bought a fleet of Phantom IIs, a Barker saloon, a Barker laundrette and a Hooper tourer, so it was not surprising that he should take a trip to the company's Derby factory during his state visit the following year.

It appeared that Rolls-Royce had great hopes of converting the king's enthusiasm for its cars into lucrative orders for aero engines. Peter Baines, who looks after the Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club archives, found several

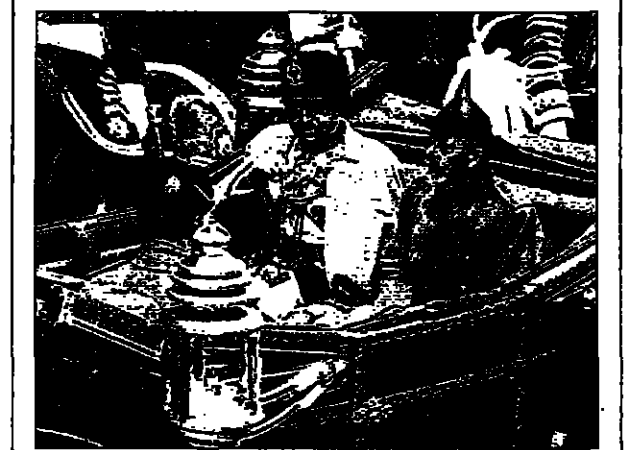
memos about the visit, one of which instructed sentries to keep under their wing various press representatives, including a man from The Times.

The company laid on an impressive motorcade, including a Silver Ghost armoured car with

machinegun turret. But, said The Times, the one that took the king's eye was a super sports touring model in light blue and silver plate. He leapt into it and "Taking the wheel and raising his hat he shouted 'goodbye' and scattered the spectators by driving the car a yard or two forward".

A fourth Rolls-Royce destined for the king, a Phantom with a Barker cabriolet body, was shipped out to Afghanistan via Bombay on August 3, 1928.

If any of the king's cars could be recovered with some proof of identity they would be worth well in excess of £50,000 at current auction prices. But their survival must be in considerable doubt. Recent photographs have shown a much later model Rolls-Royce, a 1939 Phantom III, being used for target practice by guerrillas near Kabul.



Stylish carriage: Amanullah rides with George V

village of Dasher-e-Raywat, its wheels half sunk into the mud, the dark green exterior and red leather interior appeared to be in good condition. There was no distinctive silver lady on the bonnet, and the wing mirrors had been removed. But headlights, tyres and wooden dashboard looked original. It only had 12,378 kilometres on the clock. We were told the engine worked perfectly, although it did not have a battery, so we were unable to check.

Posing for photographs, and beaming with pride, Commander Abdul Aziz Majraw, guardian of the "priceless" piece of Afghan heritage, went on at length about the history of the car and how Commander Masood intends to keep it hidden there "until Afghanistan is free again".

But it is the wrong car. Having noted down the body and chassis numbers, we later checked with the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust in Warwickshire. Anders Clausager, the trust's archivist, was adamant: "There can be no mistake. The body and chassis numbers tally exactly with our records. It's a four-litre Vanden Plas Princess exported to Afghanistan in 1962."

Clausager explained that because the basic styling of the

Vanden Plas Princess had remained more or less unchanged since the 1940s, there had been a period in the 1970s when unscrupulous dealers had bought them up, fitted appropriate accessories and tried to pass them off as genuine Rolls-Royces.

In this case, however, "the vehicle had been exported new, and there is no sign of illegal conversion". Clausager added: "It would seem that, with the passage of time, this vehicle has become confused with another in Afghan memory."

Who knows what happened to Amanullah's Rolls-Royce? Was it destroyed in the murderous shelling of Kabul in 1992 when, having defeated the Soviet-backed regime of President Najibullah, the Mujahidin factions turned their guns on each other? Or is it still hidden in some forgotten mud hut in a remote part of this tortured land?

What is certain is that the vehicle Commander Masood and his fighters think is the embodiment of their country's independence is nothing of the sort. In Afghanistan's darkest age of bloodshed and waste, one of the last remaining symbols of the country's nationhood is a fake.

Searching for a European sign language

Arthur Leathley explains why a group of foreigners may go astray this weekend

Take pity if you spot a band of bemused foreigners scratching their heads while careering around our motorways and trunk roads this weekend. The hapless travellers are, like thousands of mystified visitors to Britain, trying to fathom the logic of a signposting system that has grown haphazardly over decades.

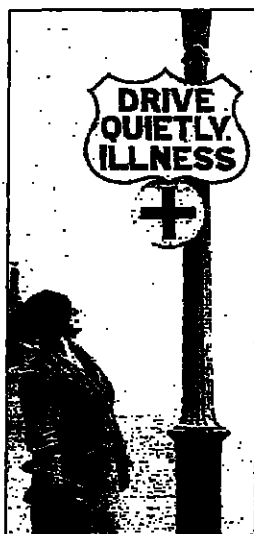
The difference this time is that the visitors might be able to do something about the forest of multi-coloured signs that confuse foreigners and even leave locals in a state of total bewilderment.

The seasoned motorists are recovering from the most exhaustive international investigation of road

signs and road systems as part of a plan to harmonise signposting throughout European countries.

A 600-mile tour of England is the second stage of an eight-week trans-European mission organised by motoring organisations, including the AA. Mind you, the AA official who devised the tour for a German driver, Austrian observer and support team must have a sense of humour — or malice.

A web that includes some of the most baffling road systems has been spun for the unsuspecting motorists. St Albans, Stratford-upon-Avon, Manchester and Birmingham's ring road networks, Milton Keynes and Oxford are among the



On the road: hush-hush in Birmingham in 1932, signs being sent out to guide Easter motorists in 1936, and a grim warning at Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, in 1930



road layouts that the team will attempt to navigate their way through. In case they actually manage to fathom their way through, London has been laid on as the *pièce de résistance*.

The team has been set the task of negotiating the intricacies of east London, where nearly all signs point to Tilbury docks but few direct motorists to destinations they might actually wish to visit.

Perhaps a European approach to

the problem is not such a bad thing. After all, the first properly organised system of signposts was the Roman use of "miliaria" which recorded each 1,000 paces along the straight routes linking the provinces of the empire. The modern British system was the result of government inquiry in 1933, although its work had to be thoroughly revised after the removal of so many signs in wartime for fear they might assist an invader.

The study of British roads will also focus attention on standards of road maintenance, surfacing, safety and lighting to pinpoint the best and worst examples of road layout and motoring advice, through signing, electronic information and radio traffic broadcasts. The European Union-funded project, which will take observers across 8,000 miles of motorways and major roads, is intended to bring the worst examples up to scratch.

Attempts to make signposting understandable to foreigners have been mired by international disputes over which system is the clearest and most efficient.

While signposting on Britain's motorway network is widely admired and frequently imitated, urban signing, especially in the capital, has been heavily criticised by UK motoring organisations. A study earlier this year suggested that 15,000 drivers are, at any

single moment, lost on the streets of London.

The study made all the more baffling the decision by the Highways Agency to cancel a £20 million re-signing project, originally planned for the capital in the mid-1980s, to coincide with the completion of the M25.

PS: If you see the travellers this weekend, point them towards Harwich; they are due in Holland by Monday for the next stage of the tour.

Most people would be too busy to notice the fashion for one-piece suits with arrows

Daylight robbery while they exchange convicts

I cannot understand all the fuss about Group 4 having to apologise for the fact that its guards transferred a prisoner from one van to another at a motorway services area on the M6 near Preston. Service areas and, in particular, petrol stations are ideal for this kind of delicate operation, as ordinary customers who run the gamut of closed circuit television and toughened glass at most petrol stations will testify.

Try visiting a garage forecourt at night. The ones which double as hypermarkets are not so bad, for there is not much point a garage selling more groceries than Tesco and Sainsbury put together if the place is to be shut down when darkness falls. But even some of these outlets do not allow customers into the shop itself at night, so one is often held up by the person in front shouting what sounds like a monthly grocery order through the grille that separates the cashier from the customers.

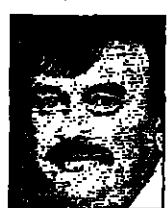
Similar problems can arise at garages which are more modest in their claims in that they do not sell everything from designer jeans to flat-pack kitchen units. The door to the area which houses the cashier is firmly locked as soon as the sun goes down, which at this time of year is just after lunch. This means that business has to be transacted through the aforementioned window, which is usually circular and carries all the signs of being bullet-proof. This type of glass is impervious to any sound short of a jet engine or a mobile discotheque, so the window is fitted with some basic amplification equipment.

This enables customer and cashier to attempt to hold a conversation, in which the customer says "Number four petrol and a Mars bar, please", but the cashier hears something resembling a car radio searching the frequency range between two FM stations. After arm-waving suffi-

stations. After anti-waving sur-



DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter
Barnard

cient to exhaust Sir Simon Rattle, the customer pays for someone else's petrol and receives 20 of the cigarettes he gave up last week.

The chances of a prisoner exchange carried out in these circumstances posing any security risk is minimal. Most of the other people around would be too busy coping with their own problems to notice the sudden development of a local fashion for one-piece suits with arrows on them.

Of course the communications shortcomings of the garage's security grille could result in a harmless youth on work experience as a cashier doing 20 years in Pentonville while a serial bank robber found himself dishing out car wash tokens to motorists, but what system is perfect?

Another site Group 4 should add to their list of prisoner swap facilities is the car park at your average Third Division football ground. That is another place usually devoid of people, even — no, especially — on a Saturday afternoon. Sunday mornings can be tricky, as that is the time when football ground car parks house

The restaurant areas are presumably off-limits, but I doubt that prisoners could afford the prices: on one motorway recently a steak and kidney pie and some coffee cost me £8.10. Not all criminals are in the car park.

MY COLLEAGUE Kevin Eason produced a breath of fresh air, so to speak, this week when he reported on research showing that drivers are breathing in up to three times as many toxic exhaust fumes from their cars as are cyclists and pedestrians. The nearer the kerb people are the more protected they are from exhaust pollution, which increases near the centre of roads.

I have never been convinced by the argument that drivers are cocooned from pollution by well-insulated cars, because heating and ventilation systems will always introduce pollution to the cab. Clearly this makes the case for reduced exhaust emissions even stronger, and drivers who selfishly thought they were safe will have to think again. And join the campaign.



Stuart Mickleburgh and Downton Club Sport: "refined enough to plod round town and still create a stir"

Downton reborn in a mighty Mini

Every time I parked this car, men of a certain age would materialise seemingly from nowhere, crouch down and peer almost misty-eyed at tyres, wheel arches and trim. Many looked wistful as they caressed the bodywork, as if they had caught a glimpse of happier days gone by.

When you accelerate, the car grows through the gears, splitting the air with sounds more akin to off-road rallying than pootling down to the supermarket. The last time I saw a car like it was 1971, when the local teenage car mechanic used to perform midnight wheelies in a car park in Wisbech while mini-skirted girls and would-be James Deans looked on in grudging admiration.

The car which belonged to the now-middle aged mechanic was a Mini Cooper S; the vehicle which brought back memories of it is an even more souped-up Mini, the Downton Club Sport 1.3i, a highly-tuned, limited edition version of the cars turned out in the 1960s by the Downton engineering company which was founded 50 years ago.

Eve-Ann Prentice

enters memory lane

engines and cylinder heads to BMC works Minis, closed in 1974 but the rights to the company were bought by brothers Stuart and Paul Mickleburgh in 1993. Operating out of Mulbarton, Norfolk, they enlisted the help of Bryan Stark, an original Downton engineer, to provide a Downton rebuilt engine for the 1.3i Mini.

The result is a toy-sized powerhouse that can accelerate from 0-60 in under nine seconds, sticks to corners as if on rails and makes you feel like a kid again. It has been built to be tough and safe, with rear anti-roll bar, high performance brake pads and shoes, and height-adjustable suspension.

The Mini, as in days of yore, is nothing if not minimalist inside. You forget how we have become accustomed to luxurious seats, sound systems and padded dashboards. But the Club World does not even have a radio and the adherence to 1960s-style means no head restraints — which may seem

a sad lack of safety equipment,
never mind comfort to some

Never mind comfort, I suppose.

With no seats in the rear and bucket seats in front, motorway driving can be uncomfortable to anyone with anything but teen-slim hips. The demonstration model was also showing some signs of wear: the instrument lights were not working, which made a night drive more stressful than it might have been, and one of the two leather straps holding down the carbon fibre bonnet was so perished it fell apart the first time I tried to unbuckle it to look at the engine. A panel-beater friend came to the rescue with a piece of wire.

The Mickleburgh brothers say this car is "designed to appeal to the more enthusiastic driver through its performance . . . it is also refined enough to plod around town all day and still create a stir."

About 50 have already been sold to a Japanese company, Dinky Classic, but be warned — nostalgia comes at a price; the Downton Mini Club Sport costs between £10,450 and £12,711.

*For information call
Downton Engineering Works
on 01508 571301*

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P & P Registrations

NUMBERS			
AA 3182	71 BOF	122 C78	79 GAN
AB787	BF71	CF:3883	8 GAN
ABL 2	13945	287 DAB	58 DB
69 AC	123 BJ	DAB 21	4 DBS
381 ACH	261 BLH	28 DAT	23 GDB
1. FOM	BL 1	28 DB	23 GDB

JAN 78	14 LYH	POL 10	16 RS
JAN 52	MAL 388	27 PH	1 RTP
JAY 82	71 MAT	72 PHW	R75 300
88 JP	MEB 68	PJ 16	SA 5
JPE 8	4123 MC	PJM 15	SAG 771

BA 87	1,050	TS FCA	1,000
59 ADD	1,200	J4 FCA	1,000
8 ALE	2,500	UOMN/ALAN/FCM	
22 BAR	1,800	FEC 871	1,000
0 BEA	2,200	FF 1830	1,400
178 BH	1,500	FM 8806	1,500
HW 7370	2,600	GL 59	2,500

LAZ 40	1,500	RBR 938	1,445
LJK 288	1,000	884 RH	3,000
LN 9705	1,800	RHE 750	1,000
LNJ 199	800	RR 3798	2,800
LS 7772	2,200	SAD 886	1,800
12 MA	8,000	SDP 6855	100
50 MAY	3,200	3333 SM	4,000

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00 LAB	79 NF	RCCL 44	47 STD
LAH 12M	40 NH	RCIN 9	24 BUE
1.6W 26	NMP 20	BDA 4	11 TAB
LAY 68E	NOT 46	8 RED	32 TAL
82 LB	8 NOV	21 RED	TC 679
LSW 1	MPD 25	REM 5	6TH
00 LC	8 MS	PH 206	TAL 122
1 LCP	8 CAT	PJA 555	TLE 309

NASH & NASH 012
OIL REGS FROM 200 CUBIC YARDS

22 711788/392400

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined using a spectrophotometer (Shimadzu UV-1601) at 663 nm and 646 nm, respectively. The concentrations were calculated using the following equations: $\text{Chlorophyll } a = 12.7 \times \text{OD}_{663} - 2.13 \times \text{OD}_{646}$ and $\text{Chlorophyll } b = 21.6 \times \text{OD}_{646} - 5.1 \times \text{OD}_{663}$.

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
67 P	C180 Classic Imperial Red with Black Cloth, 5 Speed Manual, Front Electric Windows, Electric Sunroof, Radio/Cassette, 11,250 miles	\$21,950
65 N	C200 Sport Black with Black Cloth, Automatic, Front & Rear Electric Windows, Electric Sunroof, Front Airvent, Radio/Cassette, 29,950 miles	\$21,950
67 P	C200 Elegance White/Green with Gray Cloth, 5 Speed Auto, Air Con, Front & Rear Electric Windows, Cruise, Folding Rear Seat, Folding Mirrors, Radio/Cassette, 16,500 miles	\$22,950
66 P	C200 Elegance Estate Tourmaline with Mushroom Cloth, 5 Speed Auto, Front & Rear Elec. Windows, Air Conditioning, 8 Hole Alloys, Radio/Cassette, 4,750 miles	\$25,950
68 P	E200 Elegance Brilliant Silver with Gray Cloth, 5 Speed Auto, Elec. Windows, Cruise, 8 Holes, HJWV, Radio/Cassette, 11,250 miles	\$25,950
65 N	S280 Azule Alloy with Mushroom Leather, 5 Spd Auto, Electric Seats, 6 Hole Alloy Wheels, Electric Sunroof, Radio/Cassette/Cd, 30,000 miles	\$28,950

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67 H	E230 Elegance Azuleto Blue with Gray Leather, 5 Spd Auto, Air Conditioning, Air Con, Glass Panel Elec Sunroof, Cruise, Electric Front Seats, 8 Holes Alloys, 8,700 miles	\$44,950
67 P	E230 Elegance Tourmaline Green with Gray Cloth, 5 Speed Auto, Electric Windows, Cruise, Air Con, HJWV, Elec. Front Seats, 11,250 miles	\$44,950
67 P	E230 Elegance Garden Green with Black Leather, 5 Speed Auto, Electric Windows, Cruise, Air Conditioning, Elec. Front Seats, 8 Holes Alloys, Radio/Cassette, 12,550 miles	\$41,950

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Seats, Drive Memory, Chrome
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Sensor, Noseball Miles \$65,995

Signature
USED CARS

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Signature
REAL ESTATE

SL500 (1976) Suzuki SilverHawk
Ltr. Clonies Control, Auto, ES
EPS with memory, 15K, \$24,880
1988L (1984) YamahaHawk Ltr.
Auto, Air Con, Electric Side, Rear
Controls, PRO-CD, 22K, \$24,880
1987Ltr. Estate (1976) SilverHawk
Auto, Air Con, ES, 16K, \$23,880
1988Ltr. Estate (1976)
SilverHawk Ltr. Auto, Auto, 22K
\$14K Always, \$24,880
1988Ltr. Estate (1976)
Hwy Ltr. Moto Cycle, CAT, 22K

96 N	C120	Elegance Azules Grey
98 L	C120	Elegance White/Black
96 P	C200	Sport Est Green/Black
94 M	C200	Elegance Abordine
94 M	C200	Elegance Abordine/SH
96 N	C200	Elegance Azules/Black
97 P	C200	Classic Green/Black/SH
95 N	C200	Elegance Azules/Grey/SH
97 P	C200	Elegance Est, Yonnais
93 K	C200	Blue/Black/Grey/SH
94 M	C200	Elegance Abordine/Black
96 P	C200	Elegance Grey/Grey
96 P	C200	Elegance Yonnais/Black
93 L	C200	Saloon Blue/Black/SH
97 P	C200	Elegance W/ Ruby R/SH
94 M	C200	Elegance Smoke/Grey/SH
92 J	C200	TE Estale Peleto/Black/SH
95 N	C200	Blue/Black/SH
95 N	C200	Blue/Black/SH
95 N	C200	Green/Black/SH
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95 N	C200	Blue/Black/SH
93 R	C200	Stoned Red/Black/SH

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 8200 1/2 Ave. S.W. 192-4040

931 50051, Nautic Blue/Cream
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96 P	C180	Esprit White/Black
96 P	C180	Esprigence Azurite
96 P	C180	Esprigence Green/Black
97 P	C180	Esprigence Smoke/Silver
97 P	C180	Esprigence Azurite/Green
97 P	C180	Esprigence White/Black
98 P	C200	Esprigence Black/Black
98 P	C200	Esprigence Tourmaline/Black
98 P	C200	Esprigence Azurite/Green
98 P	C230	Spot Esprigence Black/Black
98 P	C230	Spot Esprigence Azurite/Green
98 P	C230	Spot Esprigence White/Black
98 P	C230	Spot Esprigence Black/Black
94 L	E220	(W124) Almandine/Green
95 L	E220	E220 (S1) Saffron/Green
95 P	5005C	(W124) White/Black
95 P	5005C	(W124) White/Black
97 P	C200	Esprigence Tourmaline/Black
97 P	C200	Esprigence Tourmaline/Black
96 M	E230	Esprigence Black/Black
96 M	E230	Esprigence Silver/Black
97 P	E230	Esprigence Green/Black
97 P	E230	Esprigence Green/Black
97 P	E230	Esprigence Azurite/Green
97 P	E230	Esprigence Azurite/Green
98 M	E3000	Esprigence Tourmaline/Black
98 P	E230	Avantagelime Vire Green
98 P	E230	Avantagelime Red Aquamarine
98 P	E320	Green Emerald
97 P	E320	Lime Azurite/Green
92 L	5005L	Pearl Grey/Cray/Lime

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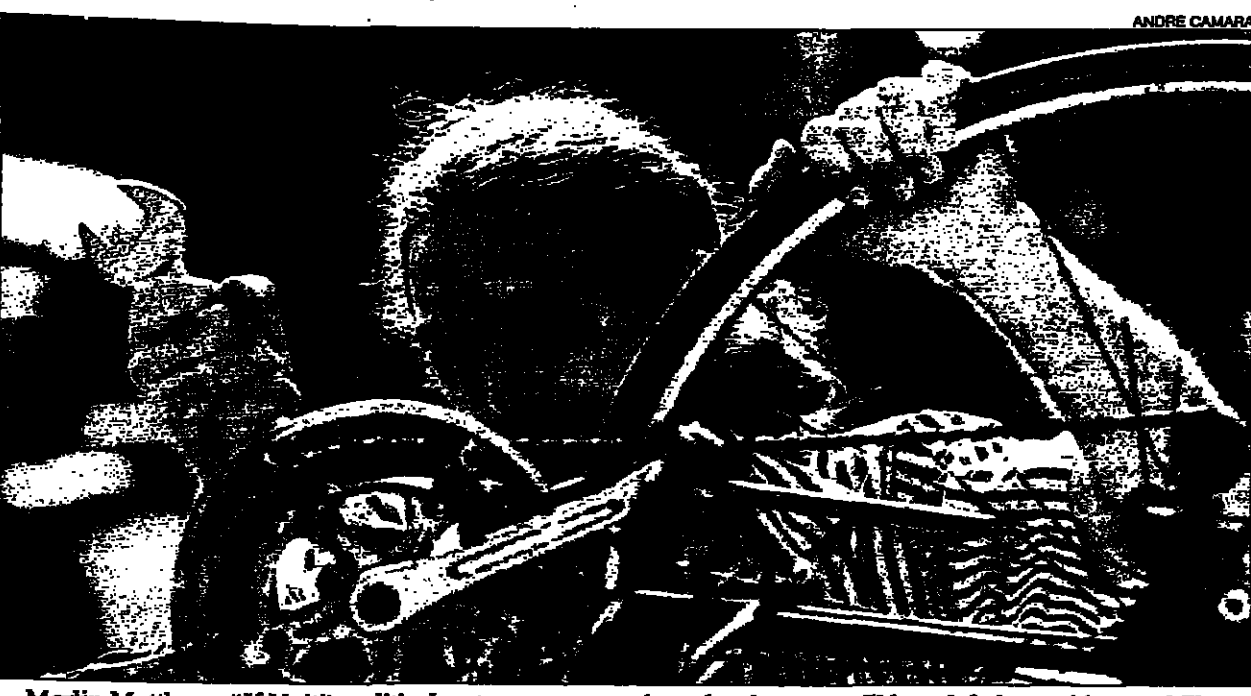
Spokesman for a small island

Morag Preston
meets the man
looking for
old bikes to
get Haiti on
the move again

Martin Matthews has a two-wheeled mission. Driven by an environmentally-friendly dream, he wants to make the bicycle a viable means of transport in Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere.

The 6ft 2ins cyclist rides under the name of Dr Bike. Dressed in flower-power shorts and sandals he earned his nickname as head of the Bike Club at the London School of Economics. In exchange for a 50p membership fee, he and his team would repair penniless students' bikes. In return for a beer, Matthews would give classes on bike maintenance.

Now he wants to round up as many unwanted bikes in the UK as he can get, ship them to Haiti and sell them for a nominal sum. His aim is to set up a string of workshops on the Caribbean island where locals can borrow tools and learn how to repair their own bikes. "Haiti has a democracy for the first time, and is ripe for progress," he says. "If the



Martin Matthews: "If Haiti's political system goes pear-shaped, at least we will have left them with new skills"

political system goes pear-shaped, at least we will have left them with new skills.

"Re-Cycle" received charitable status in July. Matthews, 24, hit on the idea after a meeting with Jo Dufort, a Haitian-born student at LSE, who now works for the charity on the island. Two years ago, he visited Haiti for the first time and saw for himself the problems facing a country where 80 per cent of the population is unemployed, it suffers from severe drought and soil erosion is a serious

threat. But, due to a long series of dictators, the island has received little aid.

Lack of transport is a long-term problem. Islanders spend four hours on average travelling to work on their fields or into town. Collecting water, wood, and food is time-consuming, while transporting them can be cumbersome. The roads are potholed and only the elite own cars. Bicycles, most of them stolen from Florida, are highly sought-after status symbols.

Schools and hospitals are

high on the charity's list of recipients. "Demand is going to far outstrip supply, so we need some kind of rationing," says Matthews. "We need to make sure that the bikes go to those who need them, not free-wheelers."

To get the project off the ground, "Re-Cycle" will initially work alongside The Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, an American group carrying out a similar scheme in Haiti. Funding will rely heavily on donations in kind. Some super-

markets have agreed to act as central distribution points, and surplus space on ships and containers already going to Haiti will be used to transport the bikes.

"The difficult bit is the shipping and storing — the easy bit is getting our hands on the bikes," says Matthews. "Fashion changes so quickly in the bike world that thousands are thrown away."

The plan is that the bikes will be repaired in Haiti. "The labour cost of fixing some bikes is prohibitive in the UK, but viable in Haiti," says Matthews, who lives in West Mersea, Essex. "People throw away inner tubes with one hole in them. Bike shops throw away a lot of old wheels, and pedals with 5,000 miles still left in them. Our aim is to teach people to fix them up, then sell the bikes for a fee, depending on how much money they've got — to show them the value of it."

At present bikes are being collected only in East Anglia, but the charity is interested in hearing from volunteers to set up networks in other regions.

Re-Cycle, 01206 383906.

Christian Dymond on a revolutionary water cycle

A pedal-powered canal and river boat has triggered "huge interest" among manufacturers after its launch at the National Waterways Festival at Henley-on-Thames.

The two berth cabin cruiser is powered by two "seacycle" units, and at a constant pedalling rate of 50rpm, two people can manage 3-4mph. Hence the name, *Escargot*.

The Environment Agency, which owns the boat, hopes it will promote the idea of using environmentally-friendly craft on Britain's waterways. Plans and building instructions for *Escargot* are on sale at £50 a set.

The 18ft 6ins long boat weighs just under three quarters of a ton and is made of a marine plywood skin on a softwood frame, bonded and coated with epoxy resin. Originally designed by Seattle-based naval architect, Philip Thiel, the UK version was built over a period of ten weeks earlier this year by Southampton boat builder Colin Jones for about £12,000.

Low energy lighting is powered by a 12-volt battery, charged by a solar panel. Plans are being explored for the installation of a larger solar panel to charge three or four 12-volt batteries and provide enough energy to run an electric outboard motor for eight hours.

"*Escargot* was designed as a DIY project, so can be built by

Pedal your own canal

amateurs from detailed plans. You don't need the skills of a specialist shipwright. The other advantage is that it can be towed behind the family car like a caravan," says Mr Jones.

He took the boat for two miles of trials on the River Itchen earlier this year, accompanied by Jon Sims, a writer for *Waterways World*, who had spotted news of Thiel's design in the specialist waterways magazine six years ago.

"*Escargot* looks extremely professional and behaves very well. The gearing on the pedals, though, needs to be changed to make it less effort on the legs," he says.

The operators sit on two saddles in the stern well of the boat — one person can also drive it — and their pedalling motion drives the propeller.

After river trials, the *Escargot* was taken by road to the West Midlands then pedalled

down the canal system from Dudley to Henley for the Festival. Thirty volunteers from the Waterways Recovery Group, the voluntary organisation which restores and repairs derelict canals, took two weeks to build the 160 miles, which included 120 locks.

"It was like cycling up a slight hill all the time, so our legs felt a bit tired and one girl had blisters on her bottom, but it's certainly a cheap way of getting around," says Sue Burdett, who organised the volunteers.

The Environment Agency, which took on the responsibilities of the old National Rivers Authority, says *Escargot* meets the twin objectives of silent running and the use of sustainable energy sources. The fact that the boat creates minimal wash because of her weight and shallow draught is welcome too: excessive "ash" can erode canal and river banks.

Inland boating attracts a sizeable number of people in this country: 44,000 hold licences from the Environment Agency for the 500-600 miles of navigable rivers which the agency manages while nearly 30,000 hold licences from British Waterways for the 2,000 miles of canals under its control. Many more have licences from other navigation authorities.

For building instructions of *Escargot* contact Jon Sims on 01703 732868 (evenings only).



Silent running and sustainable energy: Jon Sims, left, and Colin Jones on the *Escargot*

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

DURING ITS DEVELOPMENT,
The Ferrari F40
AVERAGED 187 MPH FOR
MORE THAN 48 HOURS

PETER COLLINS' MEMORIAL
IN ST MARY'S AT STONE
IN WORCESTERSHIRE IS ENGLAND
ONLY STAINED GLASS WINDOW TO
INCORPORATE A CHECKERED FLAG

LITTLEWOODS HEIR NIGEL MOORES
USED TO RACE A JAGUAR
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AFTER FLOURISHING UP FIVE MILES
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DRUNKEN FARMER ANTON
BURNED WAS MADE TO PAY
\$225,000 FOR
IT RESURFACED

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55 PVJ	41700000	01995	724072
511 RMV	41700000	01995	724072
SYE 137	41700000	01995	724072
4367 VB	41700000	01995	724072

ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY

ROLLS-ROYCE	1995	1995	1995
BENTLEY	1995	1995	1995

ROLLS-ROYCE & BENTLEY WANTED

ROLLS-ROYCE	1995	1995	1995
BENTLEY	1995	1995	1995

SUBARU

SUBARU	1995	1995	1995
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VOLKSWAGEN	1995	1995	1995
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VOLVO	1995	1995	1995
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TOYOTA	1995	1995	1995
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VOLKSWAGEN

VOLKSWAGEN	1995	1995	1995
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VOLVO

VOLVO	1995	1995	1995
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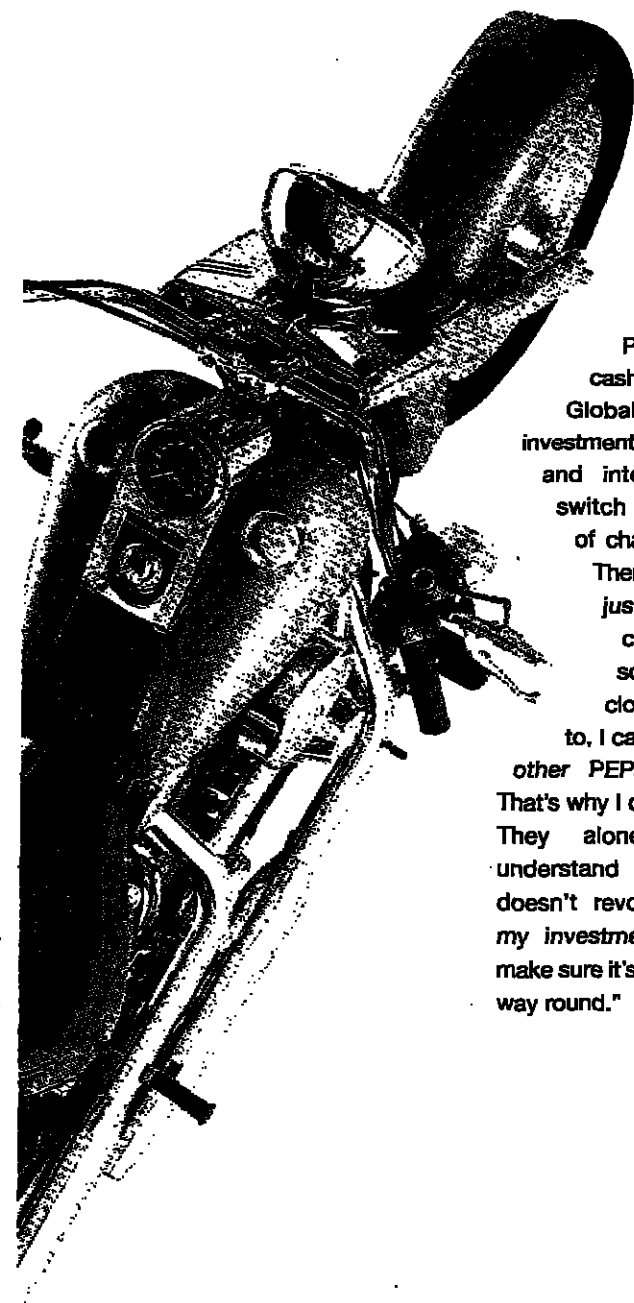
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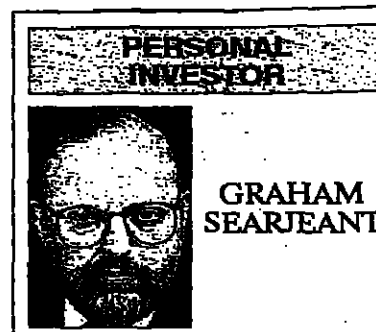
Tokyo's elusive turning point

Twenty four years on, it is hard to recapture the gloom that once engulfed the London stock market. An economic and takeover boom under the 1970 Tory government helped prices of shares and commercial property to reach heady peaks in the spring of 1972. Then it all went horribly wrong. Interest rates rose, sterling got into trouble and the economy was already suffering from inflation and a credit squeeze by the time oil prices doubled and trebled at the end of 1973.

A collapse in commercial property values sank a new breed of banks that had financed the development boom. Confidence evaporated from other smaller banks and the Bank of England had to organise a lifeboat. Even NatWest was thought to be on the brink. Companies' equity was transparently cheap, if they stayed in business. A Labour government had little sympathy. As tumbling values hit the security of loans, pension funds and endowment policies, no one could be sure who would go bust next. Rumours that a top company would collapse were finally realised as the new year of 1975 dawned. Burnham Oil, which borrowed heavily against its stake in BP, had to be saved by the Bank of England buying its holding at a bargain price.

By the end of the first week of January 1975, the old FT Industrials 30 share index had lost more than 70 per cent of its value in May 1972. And share values did not break consistently into new higher ground until 1981. Meanwhile, some investors made an awful lot of money. The tide turned when a cartel of insurers bought simultaneously. Within weeks, the index doubled, but not if they go bust. Who can be sure there will not be another Yamaichi?

The twin case for buying Japanese



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

Tokyo today. The question is whether similar profits are to be made by buying.

History rarely repeats exactly. It is eight years since rising domestic interest rates pricked Japan's asset price bubble. The Nikkei share index tumbled 60 per cent between New Year 1990 and the summer of 1992. But there was no once-for-all bounce. Doom became a way of life as the economy stalled in recession. Twice more, most recently this month, the Nikkei relapsed to a low of about 15,000, only to rebound anaemically, like a tennis ball that has lost its bounce.

In 1995, the yen grew painfully strong under American pressure before interest rates were cut to levels that are painfully low for savers. This year, the Government's foolishly premature attempt to restore state finances has wrecked the nascent recovery. Uncertainty among consumers and investors is now making things worse amid a tide of collapses typical of the late stages of recession, when any hope of saving a company's finances have gone. Financial stocks are dirt cheap as going concerns, but not if they go bust. Who can be sure there will not be another Yamaichi?

The twin case for buying Japanese

shares is that the Government has now seen the need to support the financial system with cash and that even fans of the Tokyo stock market are gloomy. Mercury Asset Management for instance, though proud of the relative performance of its Japanese unit trusts, is not yet trying to drag in the crowds.

There are, as ever, good reasons for continued pessimism. The economy is turning down again as loss of confidence at home combines with the troubles of East Asian customers. Car orders are terrible. European and American investors face other hazards. Japanese business may need a further 10-15 per cent devaluation, eating up any gains in yen share prices. And many companies are hard to rate because profits are not consolidated, making the index appear to trade at 50 times earnings.

Fund managers have also become more sophisticated since 1975. Shell and Cadbury were never likely to have gone bust whatever happened to the UK economy. So investors have kept faith with a Tokyo "nifty fifty" whose profits have kept growing and whose share ratings, on a consolidated basis, are comparable with peers in New York or London. These are mostly multinational groups such as Sony, Fuji Photo, Canon or Hitachi (somewhat less the motor-related issues such as Toyota or Bridgestone) whose management and culture is geared to global competition, plus quality domestic groups with strong brand growth or technology.

Such stocks are not so cheap but offer the best way to back Japan's future. Investors with the nerve to buy financials or smaller companies might make spectacular gains, but may end mentioned in dispatches as gallant fallers.

Some good news for savers this week as National Savings increased its rates for the third time since the base rate increase at the beginning of May. Rates on accounts have been increased by up to 0.5 per cent. For instance, on the ordinary instant access account, rates from the beginning of December will now be 2 per cent for balances of between £1 and £499. Those with balances of greater than £499 will earn 3 per cent on their savings.

National Savings has also increased the rate on its monthly income product by 0.25 per cent from January 8 next year. Amounts of less than £25,000 will earn 7 per cent per annum gross, and amounts of more than £25,000 will earn 7.25 per cent. As part of the review of rates, National Savings is adding two tiers on its instant access account. Savings of more than £50,000 will now earn 6.5 per cent interest on the investment account.

Rates on the Treasury's account have also been increased by 0.25 per cent.

National Savings provides small comfort for savers

Savings of between £10,000 and £24,999 will earn 6 per cent interest. Savings of between £25,000 and £99,999 will earn 6.25 per cent, while savings in excess of £100,000 will earn 6.5 per cent. The rate rises come into effect from December 11.

Until recently, National Savings had failed to keep pace with interest rate changes. However, with the further increase in base rates to 7.25 per cent, National Savings was unlikely to attract the extra £24 billion needed for the organisation to reach the funding target set by the Government at the beginning of the tax year.

In the first six months, it managed to attract net new

money of only £613 million. However, this week the Government revealed that it had cut its target to £2 billion.

Cheltenham & Gloucester also increased its savings rates this week. The interest on its instant access account will now be 7.25 per cent gross. The C&G Direct 30 will now pay 7.3 per cent on the top tier of £100,000 or more. The annual rate on the C&G 90-day account moves to 7.35 per cent for savings of more than £100,000. The C&G London account pays 6.25 per cent gross.

The interest rates on National Savings products are set according to the amount of money the Government needs to service the public sector

borrowing requirement (PSBR). When the PSBR is high, rates on National Savings products tend to be high to attract a lot of money. When the PSBR is lower, need not be as high.

Unlike building society interest rates, which are linked to the base rate, the rates offered by National Savings will also rise and fall in line with the yields on gilt-edged securities. Gilt yields are not directly linked to base rates. National Savings rates may remain low despite the fact that base rates have risen by a total of 1.25 per cent over the past six months.

Charles Levent-Scrivener, Towry Law, said that he did not think the National Savings products were particularly attractive. He said: "You can get better rates for lower balances on other products." Abbey National also increased its rates last week, on many of its accounts rate rises were between 0.25 per cent and 0.3 per cent.

CAROLINE MERRELL

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If you already have a PEP investment, please tick here ☐ B9D/L3

We may sometimes need to make more information requested but without which, then and there, we may not be able to offer you our products or services unless we have your consent. Please tick here ☐ I agree ☐ I do not agree

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It's time NS gave us the full Monty

There are many riveting sights in *The Full Monty*, the tale of unemployed Sheffield steel workers who take up stripping. But I was transfixed by the short fully-clad scene where the young boy takes out £100 from his National Savings Ordinary account as a loan for his indigent father. For a moment my thoughts drifted from a saga of men regaining their self respect to the story of a savings institution which was losing its way.

A £100 balance in the Ordinary Account is earning a stingy 1.50 per cent. This may be one reason why the child felt the money would be better spent on the skimpy costumes for his father's act. On Monday, the rate will rise to 2 per cent. Although this is an increase of one third, the account will continue to be uncompetitive. Even at the usually less than generous Halifax,



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

the boy could earn 5 per cent, while the Britannia First Savers account offers 7 per cent.

The Ordinary Account change is one of a number of improvements announced this week by National Savings in its business. At the same time, the organisation disclosed that it will now need to contribute just £2 billion to the Exchequer in 1997-98, instead of £3 billion. This is an admission of its failure to offer schemes that the public finds

attractive. While Premium Bonds continue to appeal to the nation's fondness for a flutter, there is less interest in the fixed-rate bonds and certificates, despite our predilection for gambling. We are reluctant to take a five-year view on interest rates. A regular savings scheme with instant access and good returns for small monthly contributions would be an excellent addition to the range. But perhaps this would be too popular?

National Savings, which has £62

billion of our money in its care is ultimately controlled by the Chancellor. If he truly wishes us to become thriftier, he should ensure that this part of his empire puts on a better show.

Long-term Brown

BESIDES desiring that we should all save more, Gordon Brown wants us to become "long-termists". In view of this, we presume arrangements will be put in place allowing those with Peps to transfer as much as possible of this cash into the new individual savings accounts. Although some in government circles would like to believe every PEP investor is a plutocrat, the reality is rather different. Millions are saving in Peps to repay mortgages and to supplement pensions, taking the self-help, long-term view Mr Brown so admires.

Home loans temptation

Fixed-rate market is hotting up, says John Givens

After a period of post-general election uncertainty, the low-cost, fixed-rate mortgage is making a comeback. A series of interest rate rises by the Bank of England shortly after Labour came to power on May 1 looked like putting an end to some of the spectacular fixed-rate deals on offer to homebuyers, with many experts predicting lending rates would continue to rise.

However, with the future for interest rates looking a little more stable now than just a few months ago, a renewed confidence has entered the fixed-rate mortgage market and lenders are putting their necks on the block by introducing an array of low-cost deals.

According to MoneyFacts, the financial statistics agency, house buyers wanting to fix their mortgage repayments for five years can get a market-leading rate of 5.99 per cent, pegged until February 1, 2003, with Northern Rock, assuming the amount borrowed is no more than 75 per cent of the value of the house.

For people with a smaller deposit, Northern Rock is offering its five-year fix for

loans up to 95 per cent at 6.99 per cent, although Coventry Building Society can offer the same deal at 6.5 per cent fixed until March 31, 2003. Borrowers looking for short-term fixes can also benefit from the fierce competition in the market.

Scarborough Building Society is offering rates as low as 1.69 per cent fixed until January 1, 1999, while Northern Rock heads the two-year league table with a rate of 3.99 per cent, pegged until February 1, 2000, for loans up to 75 per cent of the property value.

Although the one and two-year fixed-rate markets are popular, Sally Laker, general manager of Mortgage Intelligence, a home loans broker, says it is the medium-term five-year market that is capturing the imagination of house buyers. She said: "The five-year fixed-rate market has been very competitive in the last few weeks, with a range of attractive deals on offer. I think some lenders are finding themselves holding surplus mortgage funds which they

want to sell off before the end of the year and are coming to the market with deals that people cannot resist."

With the variable mortgage rate standing at about 8.7 per cent with most lenders — some have not yet passed on the Bank of England's quarter-point rise on November 6 — it is easy to see why lower rates fixed for a full 60 months are proving so popular.

Louise Pendleton of Bristol & West, which has a five-year mortgage fixed at 6.75 per cent for loans up to 90 per cent of value, says interest in medium-term fixes is strong. "It is a good time to buy a five-year fixed-rate deal and this is certainly where we are seeing most action at the moment."

However, it is not just the rates that are attracting people to take out medium-term fixes. Another important consideration is the likelihood that Britain will opt for European economic and monetary union after Chancellor Gordon

Brown's self-imposed five-year stand-off from the rest of the Continent comes to an end.

When Britain does come into line with its European neighbours it will mean UK interest rates will have to fall to the sort of levels seen in countries like France, Germany, Holland and Belgium, where base rates are currently about 3.3 per cent.

With mortgage rates linked to base rates, the size of monthly repayments could fall in the early years of the new millennium.

Because of this many borrowers are looking to fix for the medium term in the hope

that when their money saving deal comes to an end they are exposed to a market where the standard variable rate is much lower than it is now.

This means borrowers get the double benefit of a low-cost fixed mortgage now and even lower repayments when the fixed-rate period ends.

Fixed-rate deals can come at a cost that many people don't consider at the outset, with redemption penalties usually being charged if the mortgage holder changes or moves to a new lender within a specified timescale. This is typically six months of interest calculated at the standard variable rate, which on an average £60,000 mortgage would currently mean a penalty of about £2,500.



Even those who have only small deposits are catered for in today's home loans market

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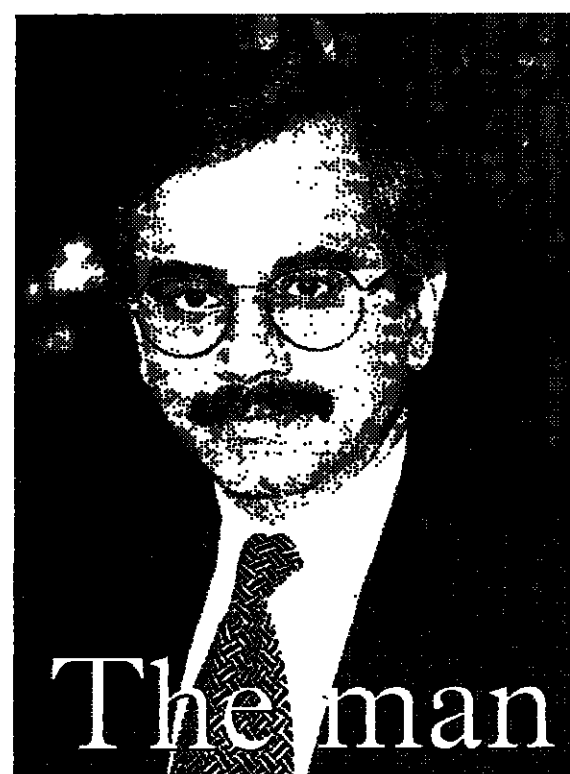
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The man who came first launches his first UK fund

A winning investor

Jayesh Manek won THE SUNDAY TIMES Fantasy Fund Manager Competitions, not just once — but twice, beating thousands of contestants including many professional fund managers. He walked off with nearly a quarter of a million pounds in prize money.

Since then Jayesh Manek has been preparing for an even bigger event, the launch of the Manek Growth Fund, a new unit trust.

Invest alongside Sir John Templeton

Jayesh's share picking ability has already attracted the attention of Sir John Templeton, the legendary investment guru who established the Templeton Growth Fund in 1954.

In July 1995 Sir John asked Jayesh to manage £5m of his personal funds. He added a further £5m in June last year. On 31 October 1997 this portfolio was worth over £13m and will be transferred into the new Fund.

The Manek Growth Fund and PEP

The Fund is an Authorised Unit Trust and fully PEPable, designed to make Jayesh Manek's investment skills available directly to all investors. It will target outstanding growth opportunities principally through investment in UK equities. It is intended that the Fund will not invest in unquoted companies.

The Manager is Manek Investment Management Limited. Its Chairman is Stanislas Yassukovich CBE, a former Deputy Chairman of the London Stock Exchange and currently Chairman of EASDAQ. The Hon Crispin Money-Coutts, Head of International Private Banking, Coutts & Co is a non-executive director. The Royal Bank of Scotland plc are the Trustees of the Fund.

Launch offer to close 16 December

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Investments in the Manek Growth Fund should be made only on the basis of the scheme particulars and key features documents which may be obtained from Manek Investment Management Limited, PO Box 17071, London EC3V 9NA. Please remember that the value of an investment in a unit trust and the income from it may go down as well as up. It may be affected by exchange rate variations, and you may not get back the amount invested. Current tax levels and reliefs may change and their value will depend on your individual circumstances. The Government has announced that from 6 April 1999 the income tax credit will no longer be reclaimable in a PEP. Other tax benefits may change with the planned introduction of Individual Savings Accounts at that time. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Manek Investment Management Limited is regulated by the Financial Services Authority.

1% LAUNCH DISCOUNT UNTIL 16.12.97



Are you in need of a little protection?

Stock markets showed their dark side last month knocking £1 billion off the value of investments held in Peps and more than £10 billion from funds held in unit trusts. It was revealed this week. Although in the UK there was no repetition of the crash that hit investors in October 1987, general market instability was enough to devalue Peps holdings from £35.8 billion to £34.8 billion and push unit trust investments down from £162.8 billion to £152.7 billion.

Before you become too depressed, though, it is worth bearing in mind that both Peps and unit trusts are still well ahead of their level 12 months ago (£23.8 billion and £128.9 billion respectively) and that the stock market is still reckoned to be the best place for growing your money over the long term.

However, there is no doubt that the going is getting tougher. With fears that economic meltdown in the Far East could lead to a general downturn in world stock markets investors could be wise to consider a change in strategy.

One result of this sea change is likely to be the growing popularity of so-called protected funds. These limit the amount of losses that investors can sustain in falling stock markets, a useful trait if the former Asian "tigers" export their recession to the West.

Around a dozen unit trusts currently offer investors this kind of protection by promising to limit losses to between zero and 5 per cent over a given period, such as three, six or 12 months. A common approach is to protect 95 per cent of investors' capital over three months. At the beginning of each quarter a new floor price is set, below which the fund will not fall, no matter what happens to the

Instability of global markets highlights the advantages of securing a financial safety net, says Gavin Lumsden

markets. This enables investors to lock in gains that could otherwise be swept away in a crash.

For example, if markets fell 15 per cent in a quarter, the most that an investor in the above fund could lose is 5 per cent. However, some funds use the precipice approach. If markets fall to rise or fall slightly the fund will automatically default to a 5 per cent loss.

Nevertheless, protected funds can be a useful stepping stone for first-time investors who are used to the security of a building society. However, more experienced investors can also benefit by protecting the gains they achieved in more bullish markets.

Fund managers achieve this protection in two ways. The first does not involve buying shares at all, which might seem strange for a stock market investment. Funds such as the top-performing Prolific Objective Limited Risk Equity and Govett UK Safeguard will put up to 95 per cent of your money in cash or fixed-interest vehicles where they are safe and earn interest. The rest is spent on options linked to indices, such as the FTSE 100, which provide exposure to stock market growth without buying the underlying stocks.

Alternatively, fund managers do buy shares and will then buy a put, another form of derivative, to provide protection against a fall in markets. Funds such as Govett UK Equity Safeguard (note the difference) and NatWest Safeguard take this approach, which enables the funds to be put into the tax-free shelter of a Peps.

All this protection comes at a price. Most of these funds do not yield a dividend (except Prolific Objective), even though they are invested in shares that do. Reinvesting dividends constitutes a third of the total return you can expect from the stock market over the long term. On top of this, protected funds are relatively expensive, charging around 5.5 per cent initial and 1.25 per cent annual management fees.

Although the locking in of gains offsets these expenses to a certain extent, even the managers of successful protected funds admit they only provide 80-90 per cent of total stock market returns. Over the long term this could have a detrimental effect, but on a shorter time scale could be less significant.

The Close UK Escalator 95 unit trust has been a good example of the advantage of locking in over the past three years. While the FTSE 100 has fallen 4.2 per cent and the average UK unit trust has slipped by 1 per cent, the Close fund has contained losses by rising a slight 0.3 per cent. Over one year it has turned £1,000 into £1,211.93, not bad considering the FTSE 100 bull run would have added only £70 more. The Prolific fund did even better, returning £1,237.08.

For further information contact Prolific Objective on 0171-280 3700; Close Fund Management on 0800 268824; AIB Govett Unit Trusts on 0845 300 9090.

Customer loyalty is being tested to the full, says Susan Emmett

Gloves are off in the battle of the banks

The launch of the Virgin One bank account in the new year will show how many people are willing to turn their backs on the high street banks, although dissatisfaction with the traditional banks is already causing thousands to switch accounts.

Once upon a time, the British were more likely to divorce than to change banks. A relationship with a bank manager was a life-long commitment. But higher expectations of standards of service have changed the way account holders approach their banks, and increasing competition means that disgruntled customers are spoilt for choice.

Richard Branson's Virgin One, which works as a joint flexible mortgage and bank account, has been billed as one of the most innovative on the market. Thousands of Virgin Direct customers have expressed an interest in opening a Virgin One account since its launch earlier this month. Many more are expected to join in the new year when the account opens to the general public.

Customers move their accounts for a variety of reasons. Some grow so irritated by the closure of their branch that they opt for a telephone banking service, such as First Direct, a division of the Midland. One NatWest customer switched to First Direct when NatWest closed her two nearest branches. She said: "When my account was transferred to a third branch, I found the service wanting. When an institution stops being the friendly bank around the corner, you may as well go to a telephone banking service. I'm delighted with First Direct."

Despite the ferocious competition from telephone-based services, the traditional banks are still picking up disaffected customers from each other. This year more than 130,000 people opened an account with First Direct, some 150,000 joined the Halifax, and Barclays says it has had an "outstanding year", attracting around one million new customers.

The other high street names are reluctant to disclose figures they describe as "financially sensitive information", perhaps because they lag behind their competitors.

All banks go to great lengths to advertise the simplicity of moving your account, offering various incentives. Barclays, for example, gives new customers five £2 vouchers to be spent at the cinema, while First Direct has mailing list campaigns offering new customers £15.

Most banks say your new account will be ready within a month, if all goes well, although the Halifax says that two months is more realistic. Whatever the delay, changing your current account requires a lot more effort than filling in a form and signing on the dotted line and many people are put off by the paperwork. According to a survey by Which? some 35 per cent of people thinking of moving banks believe the process is too complicated, while 31 per cent admitted that they could not be bothered.

Barclays and the Halifax are the fastest when it comes to sending out bank cards and chequebooks. It takes the Halifax two to three days and Barclays less than five days.

Payments from a salary or a pension, have to be transferred. Direct debits and standing orders will need



Direct route can pay

Getting to the bank was a problem for 23-year-old Jodi Cornofsky until she moved to telephone banking with First Direct. As events manager at the Connaught Rooms, the dimer and banqueting halls in London, she is in charge of organising functions — from small board meetings to dinner dances for more than 400 people (Susan Emmett writes).

Working long and irregular hours meant that Jodi could never spare the time to visit her local branch of Barclays. It only took two months in her first job before she decided to move away from the bank where she had held her student account. "It was too much hassle. I could not get to the bank and get anything done," she said. "I work really long hours and it's just easier to do telephone banking. It means I can collapse when I get home at 9 o'clock at night and pay the bills, which are always waiting for me. It's just a lot more convenient."

Jodi had no direct debits or standing orders to transfer so most of the paperwork was done over the phone. The only bother was informing her employer of her new bank details and waiting for her next salary to be paid into her new account. But according to Jodi it was worth it. "In this industry, you might have to work the weekend and get a day off during the week but the last thing you want to do on your day off is go down to the bank to sort things out," she said.

changing and any organisation or person who has ever paid into your account will have to be contacted.

NatWest says it will make all the direct debit changes and set up new standing orders within two days. But as most of these changes involve a third party, it will take a lot longer before you can say goodbye to your old bank. But the speed with which you can close your old account can often depend on how much notice your employer requires to transfer your salary. You might have to wait a month to transfer your salary, in which case moving your account can take a lot longer.

However long it takes, most banks advise new customers not to close their old accounts until the teething problems are over. Having two accounts can be confusing, so planning ahead and keeping track of payment changes and the balances is imperative.

The amount of help you get will depend on your new bank. TSB and Barclays will actually make all the transfers themselves. Most banks, however, will issue new customers with an information pack containing details of what to do and who to contact.

Both Lloyds and First Direct offer a free overdraft facility of £250 during the period of transition. Some banks have also promised to pay for their mistakes. Midlands and the Co-operative Bank pay their customers £10 for a mistake, and they do happen. The Co-op makes, on average, 600 mistakes a month.

Other incentives offered by banks include discounts on their other products. Midland offers a 2 per cent discount on personal loans within the first six months, and the Halifax will give new customers a £30 cashback on buildings insurance. Building societies, such as

Nationwide, hope to attract new current account customers with better interest rates. Even accounts under £2,000 earn 1.25 per cent interest per month, on average 1 per cent higher than most current accounts.

Any bank will tell you how much it values customers. Barclays prides itself on spotting customers who look as though they might leave and persuading them to change their minds. It has a 10 per cent success rate, but the bank still loses 8 per cent of its customers a year, half of those through death.

Pauline Hesketh, new customer manager at First Direct, emphasises that moving banks to get better service is worth the temporary inconvenience. "Many people think moving banks is a scary thing. There is a fear of transfer. But if you are not getting the service you want, then move. If you take control and do it all at your own pace there should not be a problem."

Those prepared to move often go from one of the market leaders to another. First Direct may have broken the merry-go-round by poaching customers off Barclays, Lloyds, NatWest and Midland, but despite the increase in competition on the high street the public are still reluctant to switch.

As a result most people stick to the big four, even though the Which? survey revealed that they were the most dissatisfied customers. Common complaints include impersonal service, inadequate facilities, high charges and poor interest rates. Those who do move go elsewhere because of problems they have had with a bank rather than because they can get a better deal.

Brian Capon, of the British Bankers Association, said: "People are more prepared to move nowadays than they used to be. Customers are more aware. But often they will only change because they are particularly unhappy about something."

MOVING TIPS

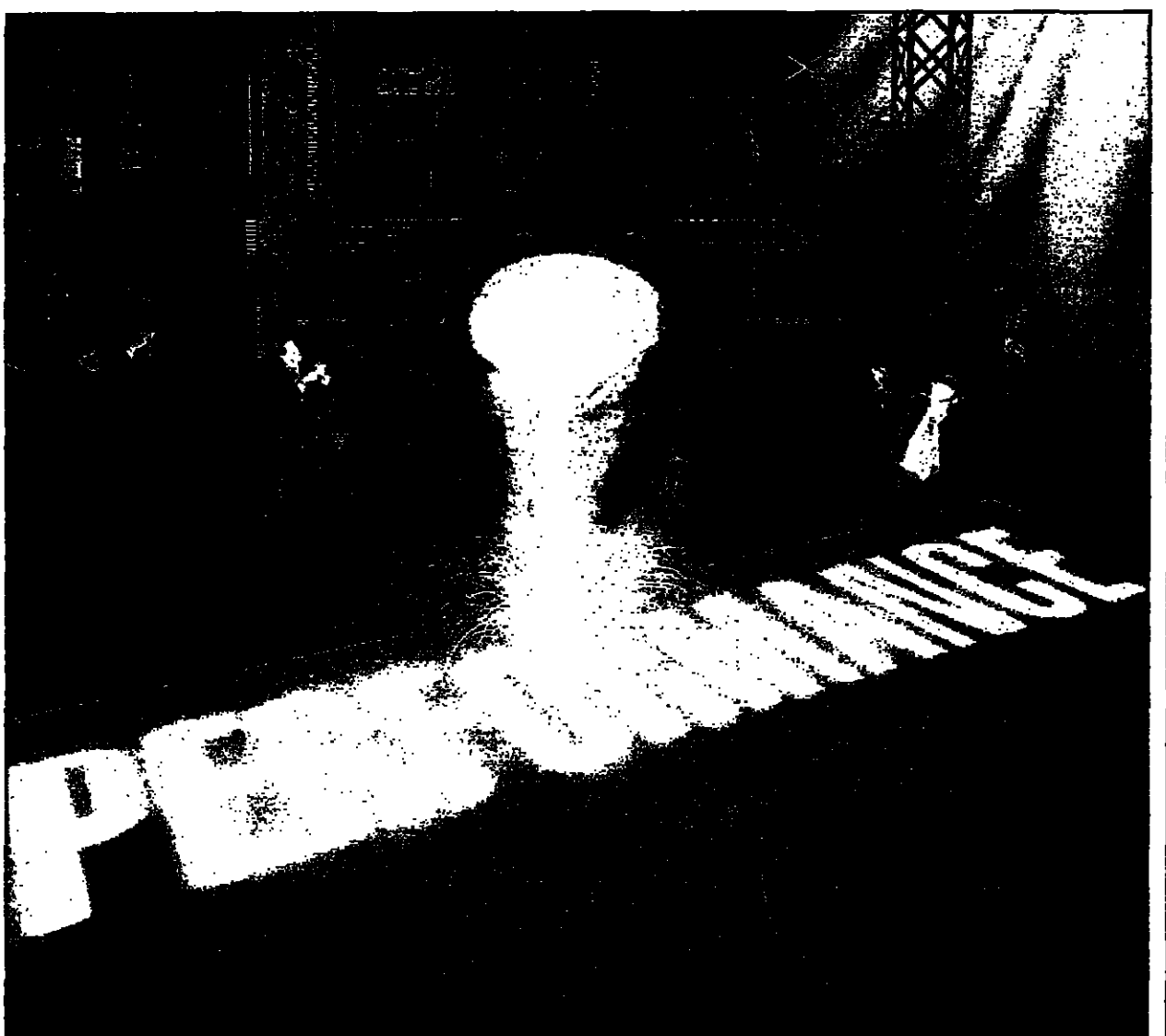
■ **Salary or pension.** Ask your employer how long it takes to change payments to your new account. Give them your new details but allow plenty of time for alterations to be made. It could take a minimum of a month to make these changes.

■ **Standing orders and direct debits.** Make sure you have enough funds in your new account when transferring standing orders and direct debits. Remember it may take a while for your salary to be paid into your new account. You will need to contact all the companies who you pay by direct debit and give them your new bank details.

It is advisable to cancel your old standing orders before passing on the details of all the people or organisations you are paying in this way to your new bank. This will help you to make sure that payment is not made twice.

■ **Take control.** Banks do help new customers to move from another bank, but it is best to check both your accounts regularly to see whether your instructions are being carried out and payments are going through correctly. Do not rely on the bank entirely. The sooner a mistake is spotted the easier it is to put right.

For further information, ring for a free British Bankers Association Factsheet on 0171 216 8801.



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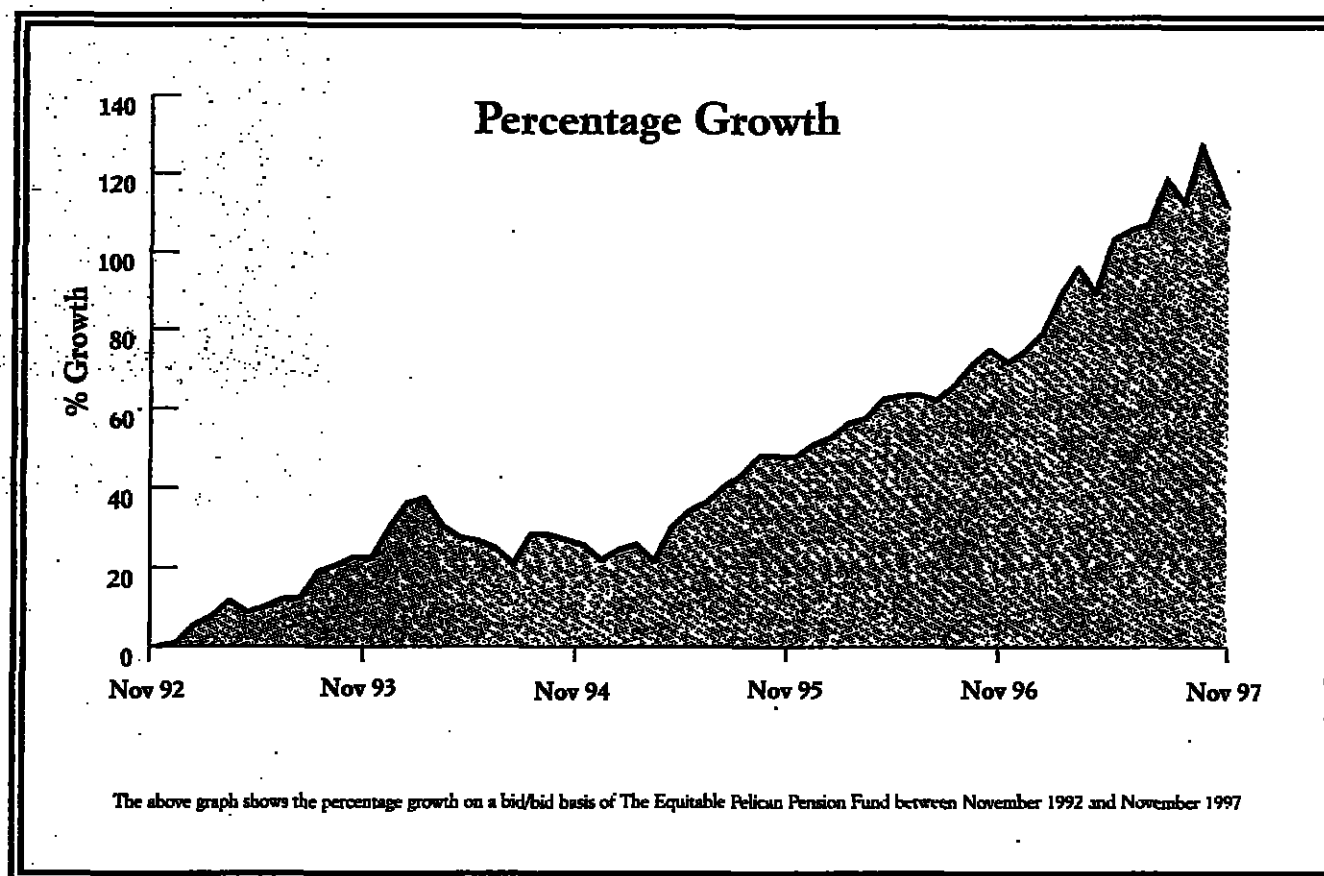
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*FPR - Unit-linked Pension Survey, September 1997

FIVE STAR Yet another survey, of best buys, by the authoritative industry journal Money Management in October gave The Equitable's monthly contribution personal pension a five star rating - the highest possible.

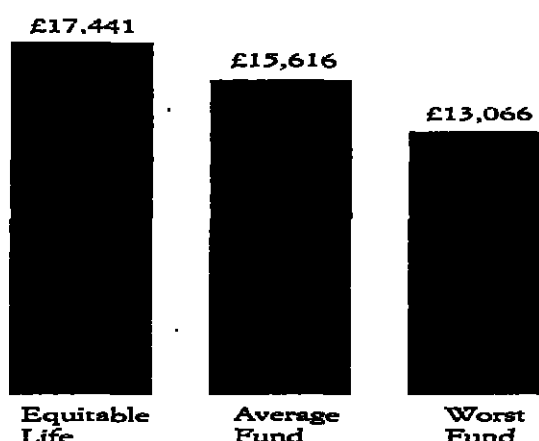
To be given a five star award a company's plan must meet demanding targets on charges and investment performance. To receive the award more than 50 per cent of our unit-linked funds over five and ten years had to have above average performance while our charges had to be below average.

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** Actual open market option as at 1 July 1997 Money Management October 1997

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Source:Planned Savings, October 1997

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Is Mr Manek just too good to be true?



Investment prescription: Jayesh Manek says his stock-picking theory was honed behind the pharmacy counter

It is Jayesh Manek the man from a small Ruislip pharmacy who best the City partridge hands down at their own game? Or is he the newcomer without a track record inviting people to invest at a time of great stock market uncertainty?

Investors now have the chance to take a punt on Mr Manek, who this week unveiled his £100-million Peppable City trust to compete against City giants such as Schroders and M&G. Such is the Manek "buzz" that talk of the trust taking £100 million — unheard of for an unknown company — is gaining ground. Already more than 20,000 investors have requested information. But investment advisers, while sharing in the excitement, are warning clients to tread cautiously.

The Manek investment fairytale began in 1994 when he entered *The Sunday Times* fantasy investment league. He became a stock market sensation when his notional investment of £10 million soared to £302 million, earning him prize money of £100,000. Then next year he did it again. Against 14,000 other entrants after a change in the rules, he turned the £10 million into £57.5 million.

The City took notice. Mr Manek was chased by headhunters offering lucrative salaries to join big institutions. But Mr Manek brushed them aside, convinced that the big investor atmosphere would crush his flair.

Then in July 1995 he received an offer he could not refuse. He was approached by the revered investment guru Sir John Templeton, who asked him to manage £5 million of

Patrick Collinson looks at the man behind a much-hyped new fund

his personal fortune. So happy was Sir John with the results that a year later he added another £5 million. Since then the total investment has grown to £13 million, all of which will go into the new unit trust.

However, the picture of the small high street chemist dispensing share tips amid the paracetamol is not entirely correct — he admits he has not worked behind the counter for seven years. The Manek family built a chain of eight pharmacies, including a site at Charing Cross station in London, since bought by Boots.

In 1990 he was in talks to create a new national chain of chemists with a view to a stock market flotation. Today, even after selling half of his pharmacies to Boots and Superdrug, Mr Manek's company still has a £3.5 million a year turnover.

"I started a business from scratch over 17 years ago. It gives me a good feel for businesses which are at certain stages in their growth, with figures such as cashflow telling me a lot," said Mr Manek, a firm believer in company fundamentals rather than the bigger economic picture. "It's pointless trying to time the market. People spend too much time worrying about the market rather than individual stocks."

Investors hoping that Mr Manek will match the phenomenal returns of his fantasy fund will almost cer-

tainly be disappointed. He admits he has taken a lower-risk approach to managing Sir John's £10 million and that the target of the new fund will be cautiously to outperform the FTSE. "When you take on someone else's money, you become very cautious. The principles are the same, but you start balancing the risk/reward ratio differently."

He intends to stay out of the City and will manage the new fund from premises in Ruislip. "The biggest advantage I have is flexibility. I am not restricted by parameters, benchmarks and house views which mean many excellent fund managers cannot act independently."

His skill is not about picking stocks at rock-bottom prices — bottom fishing in stock market parlance — but hitching a ride on those which are already rising. He picks Blacks Leisure, the sports retailer, as an example. "You could see the transition the company was going through with the success of First Sport. The directors started buying when the shares were at 60p. Eight weeks later they were at 180p. They had gone up by three times and yet I bought at that point. I bought some more when they were at 300p. They are now about 470p." His view is that if a concept works across 40 stores, there is no reason why it



cannot work in 400, keeping the share price momentum going.

He admits that running a trust with 35-40 stocks will be new territory, as he has focused on just three to four shares in the past and that he has no formal track record.

But he points to his success as an adviser to the India Value investment trust, which is up 9 per cent over the past 18 months in spite of a sharp fall in the Bombay market. It compares well against the 14 per cent fall in a rival Indian investment trust run by Flemings in the same period.

Other rivals point out that his success with Sir John's money is matched or bettered by many other managers. If Sir John had invested in a Perpetual trust, it would also have returned £13 million, while the Slater Growth fund would have achieved about £18 million.

Mr Manek is, however, a modest man who knows his limitations. He admits to his mistakes, such as a disastrous purchase of shares in Fisons. He paid £5 a share, and bought more even after they had fallen to £2.45. His hoped-for takeover bid appeared — but at only about £2 a share. "I had become too attached to the stock. Its performance became a personal thing. I'd be much more ruthless now."

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Weekend Money asked a number of investment advisers to give their views on Mr Manek's new fund. Some were very enthusiastic, while others took a more cautious line.

■ **Graham Hooper**, investment director of Chase de Vere Investments

"I do have a number of concerns. What is the financial back-up behind the company? What is the track record? It is a great story but a bit of a tricky one. He has not got a material track record and we would have to sit down and talk with him before recommending this to clients."

"I really hope that it does well, it could shake the City up, but it's not the thing for a first-time moving money out of a building society."

■ **Mark Dampier** of Churchill Investments

"He comes with some great credentials, and investment advisers cannot ignore it. But I would like to see the whites of his eyes before I recommend it. A lot of people will not buy a fund unless it has a five-year track record, although I am more willing to look at a new launch. "I'm genuinely interested in it and there is no reason why he cannot do well, but I do wonder what it is that is unique about his stock selection."

■ **John Spiers**, chairman of Best Investments

"I would be a little nervous if he has made his money in small cap stocks — can he replicate that with large caps? I would want to see what sort of resources he has to back him up. What

happens if he falls under a bus?"

"A company like Schroders can wheel out another ten great fund managers, but can this company? Normally I would not touch this sort of thing with a bargepole, but I am impressed by the connection with Sir John Templeton. The fact that he added in more money after his first investment makes me more comfortable."

■ **Chris Wicks** of Kidson Imprey Scott Lang

"It is rather an unfortunate time to launch a new fund. We are only doing a very limited amount of equity investment and are advising clients to sit on cash while the market is in turmoil."

"The fact that Sir John Templeton has put cash in is a pretty strong endorsement, but we would be very selective about recommending it. It shouldn't be your first investment, but if you have extra funds and you want a bit of fun, then why not?"

■ **Amanda Davidson** of Holden Mechan

"I think it's fantastic. People love success stories, and if he can replicate this for private investors, he is bound to get a lot of interest. I would not regard it as a core holding but I would certainly consider putting a bit in."

"You could invest the bit you can afford to risk — this carries a heavy weight — warning — but if you look elsewhere in the world, where are you going to put your risk money? Look what's happening in Japan, the Far East and other emerging markets."

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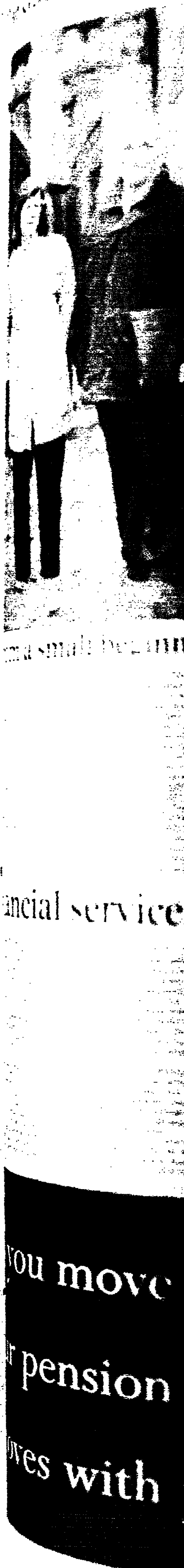
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A PEP should be considered as a long-term investment and is not suitable for everyone. If you have any doubts about your suitability you should consult your adviser. The value of investment may go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount of your investment.

It has been announced that the tax treatment of PEPs will change from 1st April 1999.



John Givens explains why credit unions are becoming so popular today and how they operate

Back to basics of mutuality

Building societies and insurance companies might well be shedding their mutual colours by the shipload but as long as credit unions exist the benefits of mutuality will still be on offer to savers and borrowers.

Credit unions are institutions that go back to the very basics of mutual status, offering people judged to have a common bond the chance to save on a regular basis and earn interest rates above those they would normally find in the high street, as well as the possibility of being able to borrow funds on preferential terms.

About 215,000 people are members of one of the 585 credit unions in Britain which hold assets of more than £116 million. The rapid growth in the industry is partly due to legislation introduced last year which relaxed some of the regulations credit unions have to work under, although another key reason for the rising number of unions in recent years has been a combination of low interest rates paid on savings accounts by banks and building societies and the often punitive rates charged by specialist lenders targeting borrowers deemed to be high-risk.

The law allows any number of people to get together and form a credit

union as long as each member can prove he has a common bond with the others. For example, working for the same company, being a member of the same club or society or even living in the same area would be considered justification for forming a credit union.

The UK's biggest union is made up of more than 11,000 employees of Strathclyde council, while the largest and oldest community-based group is also in Scotland, having nearly 5,000 members all living on the same housing estate in Clydebank.

The minimum number of members needed to set up a credit union is 21 although, according to the Association of British Credit Unions, one of the four bodies representing the credit union movement in the UK, a new group should be looking to recruit about 300 members within five years to give it a chance to build up its resources. A one-off fee of £310 is payable at the start to the Registry of Friendly Societies, a division of the Building Societies Commission, which is responsible for regulating credit unions.

In addition, each union pays £25 a year to file its accounts with the Registry of Friendly Societies and must also take out an annual fidelity insur-

ance bond which covers the group against fraud or theft. This is linked to the size of the assets and is likely to cost no more than £100 in the early years.

Interest on savers' funds is paid in the form of an annual dividend from the credit union's profits after costs. These are divided among members on a pro rata basis on the size of their deposit. However, it is with borrowing where the real benefit of credit unions comes to the fore. Many of the people who save through credit unions, particularly those that are community based, are on low incomes and have difficulty getting loans or overdrafts through banks and building societies.

Therefore they are often forced to turn to the specialist lenders which will load the amount of interest payable on a loan to reflect the belief that they are higher than normal risk. In some cases annual rates are as much as 160 per cent compared with the average rate at leading banks or building societies of about 15 per cent.

As long as a member has been saving for at least three months, a standard credit union can offer a loan of up to £5,000 — or £10,000 for larger unions — although it must keep 10 per

cent of its assets as a reserve. The amount a member can borrow is normally limited to five times the sum saved and cannot exceed 1.5 per cent of the union's total assets.

The decisions on borrowing are taken by a committee which is democratically elected by the members and the committee cannot charge interest on the funds at more than 1 per cent a month, which is equal to an APR of 12.68 and as competitive as any loan you could find from the leading names in the high street.

Although some of the biggest credit unions use credit reference agencies to check out people applying for loans, most do not and base the decision on the individual circumstances and integrity of the member. This means that anyone with a patchy financial history can still be offered a loan if they can convince the committee that they have the ability and intention to repay it.

Anyone getting into arrears is sent a series of three reminders. If the problem continues they are asked to attend an interview with the credit union committee to discuss the problem.

Association of British Credit Unions (ABCU): 0171 562 2626.



From a small beginning

Redcliffe Action Group, based in Bristol, is hoping to set up its own credit union to help to encourage people living in the city centre community to save regularly.

The action group, which will become one of 50 new credit unions established in the UK every year, hopes that a union will give residents a new sense of purpose in a community which has had its problems in recent years, including drug abuse, car theft, violence and burglary.

The group, which has eight members already com-

mitted to the credit union idea, is expanding the Christmas club principle it set up in November last year where members pay in £5 a week and will get £260 at the beginning of December to help to cover the cost of the festive season.

Irene Mays, the chairwoman, who runs the group with the help of David White, the secretary, both pictured above, said: "People will be able to pay in as little as much as they can afford each week, even just 50p, and as long as they have saved for at least 13 consecutive weeks, they will be able to apply for a

loan which they can repay each week at the same rate as they are saving."

Ms Mays added: "We have applied to use a couple of rooms in a former doctor's surgery on the estate and by the time we get the go-ahead to start having regular meetings, we will have obtained more information on how to run it and hopefully will get the credit union started before Christmas."

The group's biggest challenge will be to attract the extra 13 members it needs to satisfy the credit union regulations of a minimum membership of 21 people.

HOW TO RUN A CREDIT UNION

■ At least 21 members must be willing to join the credit union.

■ A one-off joining fee of £310 is payable to the Registry of Friendly Societies.

■ An additional £25 is charged each year when accounts are filed.

■ Fidelity insurance must be taken out to protect against theft and fraud.

■ Members must appoint a committee which will make decisions on loan applications and other issues.

■ Members can ask for a loan after they have been saving for at least 13 consecutive weeks.

■ Loans of up to £5,000 can be agreed, or £10,000 for the larger credit unions.

■ Borrowing is usually limited to a maximum of five times the amount the member has saved.

■ No loan can be for more than 1.5 per cent of the credit union's total assets.

■ Interest on loans is pegged at a maximum of 1 per cent a month, 12.68 per cent APR.

■ Unions must keep 10 per cent of their assets as a reserve.

Financial services 'kitemark'

Like household appliances, car windows and plastic toys, the information consumers get on their pensions and mortgages will also be subject to a Quality Mark similar to the British Kitemark. In a new initiative, launched this week by the Money Management Council, a charity dedicated to providing consumer education on money matters, literature distributed by the financial services industry will receive a Quality Mark if the information is clear and accurate.

It will apply initially to generic information on financial services, but council members hope to extend it to all forms of financial marketing material. The scheme has been welcomed by the industry and the Financial Services Authority, the new super-watchdog.

Helen Liddell, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury, also welcomed the scheme, as did Sir Bernard Ingham. Ms

Liddell said: "The problems of home income plans and personal pensions, to name only two of those which feature in my mailbag, have left many people apprehensive about approaching the financial services industry. This is a time when people need as much information as possible about how to make the most of their financial resources. I believe the Money Management Council has shown foresight and tenacity in bringing the Quality Mark into being."

The cost of financial ignorance is a startling £39 billion a year, according to Marie Jennings, chairman and founder of the Money Management Council. It is also estimated that the average person loses £50,000 in a lifetime through lack of knowledge on money matters.

At the launch, timed to coincide with National Consumer Week, Ms Jennings said: "There is no doubt that much financial information is confusing, if not

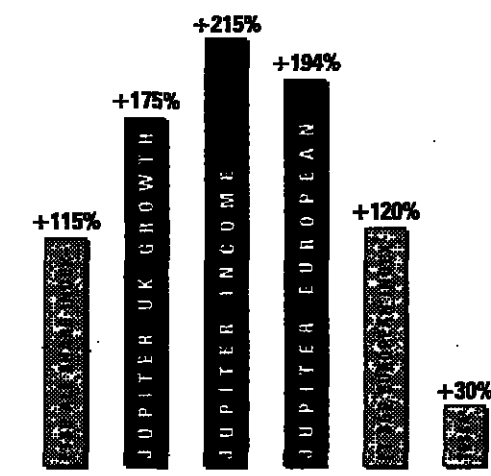
frightening. We intend to overcome this with our new Quality Mark scheme."

However, the scheme will work on a purely voluntary basis. Although there is no compulsion for companies to submit material, the council hopes that the credibility associated with the mark will encourage financial providers to send in material. The scheme will enable consumers to know that any material carrying the Quality Mark is unbiased, factually correct and easy to understand.

Sir Bernard, former press secretary to Margaret Thatcher, better known for his notoriety as a communicator, said: "In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with a clear and direct approach. I welcome this initiative to increase transparency in money matters." For further information ring the Money Management Council on 0171-736 1163.

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Tim rose to his online fitness challenge

Former pharmaceutical expert Tim Kyndt had little choice but to throw himself in at the deep end when he set up an online health and fitness club last year.

The 37-year-old left his job as a strategy development manager with SmithKline Beecham in January 1996 to set up CyberSport, an Internet-based system which allows people to plug their exercise machines into their computers and compete on screen against other keep fit fanatics around the world.

Although he established the business with two colleagues the responsibility for selling the company's services fell firmly at Tim's feet and he had little choice but to get out and about to try to get people to buy the online service.

He said: "After doing a lot of market research we rang

around the major companies to set up appointments with people who could make decisions. When we had got a foot in the door we went along with a comprehensive business plan and presented them with key reasons why they should get involved in the project.

"In total we made more than 70 pitches to companies operating in the health and fitness market, and to banks and other financial institutions, and we now have 15 partners very active in promoting the online service."

Although it tested his abilities, his hard work paid off and as sales increased the company was boosted by winning a £50,000 Information Society Initiative award in a scheme sponsored by The Sunday Times.

JOHN GIVENS



Tim Kyndt made more than 70 pitches to companies in the health and fitness market

John Givens continues our series for those intending to become self-employed

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But now you've decided to go it alone things are going to change dramatically and the responsibility for selling your products or services is yours and yours alone. Selling is one of the major challenges of self-employment and unless you were an award-winning super-salesman previously, the learning curve will be steep. A reputable sales training course would help, although at £300 to £400 a day they are expensive; so understanding the basics might be the best place to start.

Talk to the decision maker. If you try to sell to a person who does not have the authority to make a decision to buy, the chances are you are wasting your time.

Be yourself. The notion that sharp-suited, fast-talking salesmen make the world go round is simply not true. Most people are put off by Arthur

SELLING

Daley types who give you the hard sell and expect you to sign on the dotted line there and then. Avoid play acting and always be yourself.

Be prepared. This doesn't just mean making sure you know everything about what you are marketing, but also that you have all the back-up support you need. For example, a company brochure or other product literature will be key to getting your sales message across, although you can expect to spend at least £1,000 for 500 copies of a colour, four-page, A4 publication. Leaflets are less expensive, costing around £200 for 1,000 colour A4 flyers; much less for black and white.

Samples of your work can also go a long way to convincing a sceptical customer to buy; and also make sure you are armed with price lists, product specifications, 'deliv-

ery information and any other facts and figures you can offer to a potential buyer.

Understand the customer. If you know very little about the company or person you are trying to sell to, the chances of failing leap. Make sure you do some research beforehand.

Know your lines. When you meet someone who might be interested in buying what you have to sell you will need to give a sales presentation. You should make your pitch in a confident and well-structured manner, and also be able to answer any questions.

Successful selling is not about talking but about listening; that way you will hear what the customer wants. If you can satisfy the requirement, you'll almost certainly make the sale. A sales presentation should typically mean you spend one third of the time

talking and the other two thirds listening.

Your unique selling point. All businesses need to have a unique selling point, commonly referred to as a USP. This is simply one thing you can offer which is better than any of your competitors. Your USP could be one of a number of things — the cheapest, the best quality, the fastest delivery, the most comprehensive guarantee or the most flexible payment terms. Whatever it is, learn it and make sure your customers know it.

Overcoming objections. As any diehard salesman will tell you, overcoming people's objections for not wanting to buy is the biggest test you will face. Often, an apparent objection is really hiding the real reason why a customer says no, so find out exactly what the real problem is with careful questioning.

For example, if someone says your product is too expensive but you know it is one of the most competitively priced on the market, by politely asking questions you might discover that the real reason for the objection is that the customer cannot afford to buy at the moment but could in

two months' time. Having identified the real problem, you might decide to give the customer the product now on the understanding that payment is due after 60 days.

Ask for the sale. One of the main reasons why self-employed people fail to win business is that they are scared to ask for the sale. Despite spending time and effort on a sales presentation, most people still shy away from asking "will you buy what I am selling?". This is partly because of the fear of rejection and partly because it can be embarrassing. But if you don't ask, you risk losing the business.

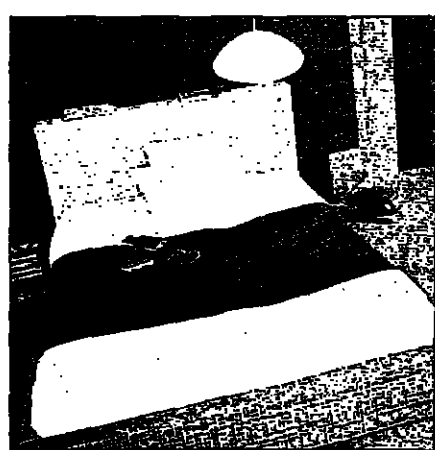
Keep your promises. If you have told a customer you will do something, make sure you stick to the commitment. Failing to carry out promises is a certain way of losing the support of an existing client or the interest of a potential customer. Even if you have problems doing what you said you would do, at least let the customer know rather than bury your head in the sand.

Don't give up. The only certain thing about trying to sell whatever you have to offer is that you will suffer setbacks.

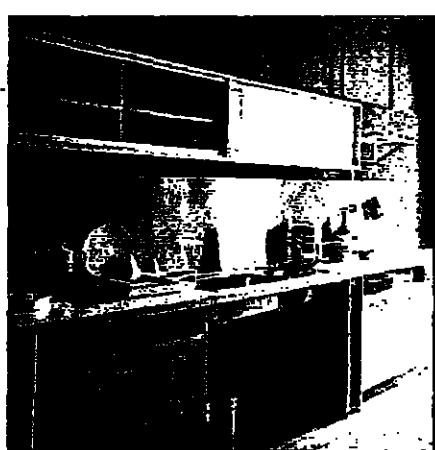
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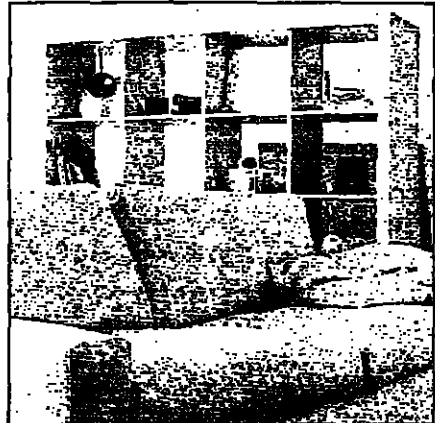
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This week *The Times* gives you the opportunity to save 20% on your shopping bill at Habitat. The offer is available until December 21 at all 40 Habitat stores in the UK and Republic of Ireland. A Habitat shopping card (illustrated left) was inserted FREE with Monday's newspaper.

To qualify for your discount simply attach, to the card, three differently numbered tokens from the six published in *The Times* this week, plus the token which will appear in *The Sunday Times* tomorrow. Your completed shopping card entitles you to buy as many items as you wish on a single shopping trip and to receive a 20% discount on your total bill. Normal TNL rules apply. For details of your nearest Habitat store, call 0645 33 44 33.



Hardern's three-pronged attack

Carpetbagging is not dead, it seems. Michael Hardern, the eccentric freelance builder, is once again campaigning to get on the boards of three leading building societies to try to force them to convert.

Mr Hardern, who heads an organisation called Members for Conversion, is attempting to be elected to the boards of the Bradford & Bingley, Britannia and Chelsea. All three claim they are firmly committed to remaining mutual building societies — the total combined assets of the three societies is £40 billion, and the societies have nearly 4.6 million members.

Earlier this year, Mr Hardern and four other pro-conversion candidates failed to join the board of the Nationwide, the UK's biggest building society. Mr Hardern's ultimate aim was to force the society to float. Flotation of the Nationwide could have been worth up to £2,000 per member.

At the time, the vote against Mr

Hardern was decisive. Only one in three of those that voted were in favour of Mr Hardern's election. However, his campaign was marked by a series of bizarre events, including a sudden change of mind over his views on conversion. Many believe that his eccentric behaviour in the run up to the vote contributed to the campaign's failure.

Some of those who voted against Mr Hardern were not voting in favour of the mutualism much coveted by the Nationwide board. Instead, they were voting against the election of people who they believed did not have the credentials for board membership.

The failure of the vote meant that the carpetbaggers went into abeyance for a little while. Mr Hardern's renewed campaign is bound to stir up interest in carpetbagging once again. Mr Hardern claims that if the three building societies were forced to convert, members

could receive payouts of up to £2,000 a piece.

During the summer, carpetbagging activity was so intense that the Nationwide was forced to close its doors. This society also recently began to force those opening accounts to sign away to charity their rights to any windfall after flotation.

The building societies under threat from Mr Hardern fear that a renewed bout of carpetbagging activity will lead to further disruptions in the service they offer their customers. In order for his board nominations to go ahead, Mr Hardern needs signatures from 50 of members of each of his target building societies. The elections will take place at the beginning of next year.

The minimum amounts required to open accounts with the Britannia, Chelsea and Bradford & Bingley are £2,000, £2,500 and £500 respectively.

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The "greed is good" philosophy espoused in the film *Wall Street*, where making money took precedence over everything else, has largely gone out of fashion in the early Nineties.

Besides, most people are naturally conservative and this is reflected in their attitude towards money. So the majority of people who come into an inheritance or accumulate a large lump sum will want to play safe rather than go for broke.

However, a handful of people will adhere to the old adage that you have to speculate to accumulate. Such investors will want to adopt a high-risk strategy in the hope that this will maximise the returns from their investment. A much more likely scenario, however, is that more cautious investors with a reasonably large sum of money to invest will decide to take a punt with a small percentage of it.

As a rule of thumb, collective investment schemes, such as unit trusts or investment trusts, are less risky than investing directly in the underlying assets. The financial adviser Roddy Kohn, managing director of Kohn Cougar, rates investments on a risk scale of one to ten and he considers direct equities to be off the scale. "You only have to look at the performance of some well-known blue chip shares to see how risky this strategy can be. Some shares have more up and downs than a proficient yo-yo operator."

For example, shares in HSBC Holdings, one of the largest banking groups in the world, rose to £23.69 earlier this year before

Fair game for fortune hunters

Hazel Spink assesses the risk of collective investment schemes



Gordon Gecko showed the ugly side of 1980s society with his "greed is good" philosophy in *Wall Street*

falling to a low of £12.16. Shares are now back up to £15.30 but clearly investors who bought at the peak are now facing substantial losses. However, if you choose the right company you can make significant gains.

Unquoted and smaller companies are even more risky, but if you choose the right company you can make a killing. Stephen Lansdown, chairman of Hargreaves Lansdown, said: "Penny shares, which have a share price of less than 10p, can do very well but you are counting on one company to come up trumps. Investors must also remember that these markets are often fairly illiquid — it is easy to get into them but getting out is a different matter."

Having said this, some collective investment schemes — in particular those investing in specialist areas or single countries — can be fairly risky.

Ian Millward, investment marketing manager at Chase de Vere, said: "If you choose a fund that is spread across both continents and 15 to 20 markets, then obviously the risk is less. If you choose a single country fund, you could see some fantastic returns if that country does well, but performance could be abysmal." Other potentially risky areas include Europe, North America and smaller companies.

Derivatives, such as futures, options and warrants, can offer the prospect of spectacular growth, but they are also highly risky. In a sense, you are gambling on stock market movements.

Put simply, futures are the obligation to buy or sell shares or an index at a certain price and at a

certain date. Investors are obliged to buy or sell at the chosen time and price even if the market has moved against them.

With options, investors pay a small deposit, known as a premium, which gives them the right to buy or sell at a certain price on a certain date, but they can decide not

to exercise their option if the market has moved against them. In this case, they simply lose their deposit. Warrants are effectively long-dated options.

Govett Geared UK Index unit trust is a high-risk, high-return unit trust. "The fund uses futures on the FTSE 100 index to achieve twice the

exposure to the index. This can mean twice the upside or twice the downside," said Ian Morley, director of AIB Govett. "When markets are strong this fund will roar ahead, but if they are weak you could lose money."

However, put options are taken out so that in the event of substantial failure, investors would not lose all their money.

The fund has performed extremely well over both one and three years. For example, over the three years to October 31, 1997, the fund rose by 130.96 per cent, compared with a sector average for the equity income and growth sector of 57.57 per cent. "This shows the power of derivatives when used more speculatively," said Mr Morley. However, over one month to October 31, the fund fell 8.1 per cent compared with a sector average of just 5.8 per cent.

Mr Morley advises even aggressive investors who are keen to tap into the growth potential offered by derivatives, to do so via a collective investment scheme. "Generally speaking, it is not advisable for private individuals to trade in futures, options or warrants themselves because these markets move very quickly and if you gear yourself up you could lose a lot of money if you get it wrong."

Some advisers are extremely

sceptical about using derivatives. Mr Kohn said: "Derivatives are highly complex instruments and as soon as you get into this game, you are putting your trust in individuals whose first priority is making money for themselves."

Certain investment trusts also offer the prospect of high returns. Tim Cockerill, investment director at Whitechurch Securities, said: "If you want to get seriously high-risk then you could go for the capital shares of a split capital investment trust."

Split capital investment trusts offer investors different classes of shares. The safest are zero dividend preference shares which offer investors a predetermined level of growth.

When the investment trust is wound up at the end of its life, the obligations to zero dividend preference shareholders are met first. Then there are income shares which, as their name suggests, offer a high level of income. The capital shares are, in a sense, last in the pecking order on wind-up but they are entitled to all the growth in the trust after the other classes of shareholder have been paid.

Clearly if the trust performs badly the capital shareholders suffer. But if it sparkles, they can do very well. "If the market rose by 10 per cent during the investment period, capital shareholders may well see a return of 30 or 40 per cent. If, on the other hand, it works in reverse they can get clobbered," said Mr Cockerill.

Most people fail to make sense of Serps

Launched by Baroness Castle of Blackburn in 1978, the state earnings related pensions scheme (Serps), the additional state scheme for employees without company schemes, has never been far from controversy.

Its eventual abolition may be planned by government ministers but until that time millions of people will still need to rely on the system to provide their pensions.

Many are having great difficulty in calculating what their benefits should be. As the payouts are, at best, modest, this causes great irritation. Various surveys have shown that Serps is the least understood of any type of pension scheme, public or private.

Until 1988 every employee had to contribute to the scheme unless he or she were members of a "contracted out" company pension scheme which provided replacement benefits.

After 1988 it became possible to opt out of Serps into a personal pension. However, for men aged over 50 and women over 45 at the time, opting out was not likely to be worthwhile.

Maureen Ducker, a Weekend Money reader from Colchester, Essex, was confident that he knew what his entitlement was. In view of his earnings, Mr Ducker had little doubt that he would receive the maximum benefit under the scheme when he retired last year.

He was therefore surprised to be informed last October by the Department of Social Sec-

Helen Pridham attempts to clear confusion surrounding the least understood pension scheme



urity that his Serps entitlement was several pounds less than the maximum published benefit for 1996-97 of £101.44.

After querying the amount, he was told — after a delay of almost 12 months — that he had not made the maximum contributions required. Bearing in mind that he had always earned more than the required amount, this has left him feeling very dissatisfied.

Pensions Postbag replies: It was not easy to get to the bottom of Mr Ducker's case, and even then it was hard to believe the reason why he and others like him will not receive the maximum benefit. But first a word of explanation about how a Serps pension is calculated.

It is not based on an employee's total earnings. It is related only to those earnings which fall between the lower and upper earnings limits for national insurance contributions purposes. These limits are increased each year in line with inflation. The current lower earnings limit is £62 a week (£3,224 a year) and the upper limit is £465 a week (£24,180 a year).

Therefore an employee earning £200 a week this year, for example, would have his or her Serps pension based on £138. Meanwhile, an employee earning £465 or more a week would have his or her pension for the year based on £403, no matter how high the actual earnings were.

But the calculations get more complicated because the employee's earnings in the band for each successive year are revalued annually in line with the rise in national average earnings up to state pension age.

Each revalued year's earnings are then added together and the total is divided by a factor to calculate the average earnings on which the final pension is based. Under the original scheme, the pension was to be worth 25 per cent of a person's average earnings over their 20 best years.

However, radical revisions were made to Serps in 1988 by the Conservative Government. These cut back pension entitlement to 20 per cent of earnings averaged over an employee's entire working life. However, that change is being phased in and the 25 per cent rule still

applies to employees reaching state retirement age up to April 1999.

Thereafter, the pension will be a reduced proportion of average earnings based on the actual number of years' contributions made between 1978 and a person's pension age until the new benefit system matures around 2030.

Given these complexities, it is clearly not that simple for laymen to calculate their own Serps entitlement, and the Department of Social Security offers a free pensions forecast service for anyone who wants to know how much additional pension they can expect.

All you need to do is ask your local DSS office for form BR19. However, Mr Ducker's case appeared to be straightforward. His earnings had always been above the upper earnings limit since 1978, so it seemed fairly obvious that he should qualify for the maximum pension.

The reason he does not is Kafkaesque. Although the Contributions Agency, an offshoot of the DSS, which keeps contribution records, cannot discuss individual cases, John Harten, a spokesman, explained: "Only those employees who are paid four-weekly, which gives rise to the payment of extra national insurance contributions, will be eligible for the maximum published Serps benefit."

Mr Harten acknowledged that most employees are paid at weekly or monthly intervals and are therefore not eligible. Mr Ducker had been paid monthly.

If an insurance company had come up with such an explanation, the chances are that the Government would be naming and shaming it. Perhaps it needs to put its own house in order.

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APRs variable and typical and calculated on the assumption that the mortgage rate applicable during the fixed rate period (which will run from the date interest is first charged in respect of the mortgage) will apply for the full term of the loan. However, the rate is variable and, from 1.1.2003, the Woolwich's prevailing standard variable mortgage rate will, in fact, apply. These terms apply only where a written offer of advance was issued on or after 22.11.97 and the mortgage completed by 30.04.98. Typical example: based on an endowment mortgage interest rate of 6.59% and a purchase price of £70,000, a couple taking out a mortgage of £55,000 from which a Higher Percentage Advance Fee of £1,081.25 will be deducted over 25 years (where the amount of the advance is 92% of the Woolwich's valuation of the property) would pay interest of £392.38 per month gross (300 payments). Annual interest: £1,811.19. Valuer's fee £165. Application fee £350. Homewise premium £370. Solicitor's mortgage charges £126. Deeds Administration Fee payable on redemption £85 and a single repayment of capital of £85,000. Total amount payable £174,971.19. 6.69% 7.1% APR. The example assumes the mortgage starts in the middle of the month, a minimum guaranteed death benefit of £85,000 and a term of 25 years for the endowment policy. A first charge over your property will be required as security. For loans other than repayment loans, a suitable endowment policy, PEP or pension plan will also be required. A suitable level term assurance policy will also be required for PEP or pension plan mortgages. Where the mortgage exceeds the Woolwich's normal maximum percentage advance of 75% additional security will be required for which a Higher Percentage Advance Fee will be payable. If the mortgage is either redeemed (in full or in part) or transferred to another scheme before 1.1.2004, a fee equivalent to 6 months' interest at the rate payable at the time of repayment will be charged. Remortgages available up to 95% loan to value. All mortgages are subject to status, valuation and a minimum age of 18. A written quotation is available on request from any branch or from Woolwich plc, Dept 155, Watling Street, Bideford, Devon DA8 7BR. Woolwich plc represents only Woolwich Life and Woolwich Unit Trust Managers, which are regulated by the Financial Services Authority for life assurance, unit trust and pension business. Registered office: Watling Street, Bideford, Devon DA8 7BR. Registered in England no. 3295699. Woolwich plc adheres to the principles of the Code of Mortgage Lending Practice. Copies of the code are available on request. "FIRM"

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Legal guidance for leaseholders

Leaseholders wanting to buy their freeholds or extend their leases need not be at the mercy of their landlords, according to a recent report. The comprehensive study by Chartered Surveyors Leasehold Enfranchisement Ltd details how leaseholders can benefit from a 1993 Act.

It outlines how the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act was used to settle 166 claims taken to Leasehold Valuation Tribunals (LVT). The cost of buying your freehold or extending your lease tends to be much closer to leaseholders' valuations and much lower than those of landlords.

As LVT decisions are "benchmarks" for future claims, these findings suggest that disputes between leaseholders and landlords over the price for freeholds, lease extensions or landlords' fees will certainly increase.

The 61-page report is available at £25, including postage and packing, from Leasehold Enfranchisement Ltd at 33 St George's Drive, Pimlico, London, SW1V 4DG. Telephone: 0171 821 8320. Extracts can be viewed on the Internet at www.leasehold.co.uk.

SUSAN EMMETT AND JACQUI SPRAY

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Instant Access Accounts				
Irish Permanent 0800 973321	ExtraPost Inst	£1	6.75	Mth
C&G from 1.12.97/0800 742437	InstantB	£1,000	7.25	Yly
Bank & General Bank 0500 111200	Direct Access	£2,500	7.15	Yly
Alliance & Leic BS 0845 608860	First Cts Inst	£10,000	7.50	Yly
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS				
Northorn Bank 0800 202121	Select 90	£10,000	7.90	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171-203 1650	Base Plus	£2,001	8.00	Yly
Bristol & West 0800 202121	1yr bond	£10,000	7.50	Yly
Bristol & West 0800 202121	30 day p	£1,000	7.50	Yly
	6 month	£ 5,000	7.75F	OM

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Premier+Feeder	5 year	£3,000	7.85	Yly
Investec Bank (UK) 0171 203 1650		5 year	£9,000	7.85	Yly
Manfield BS 01246 202055		5 year	£500	7.75	Yly
Yorkshire BS 0800 378836		5 year	£2,000	7.85	Yly

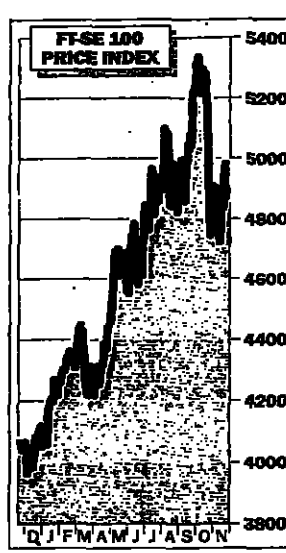
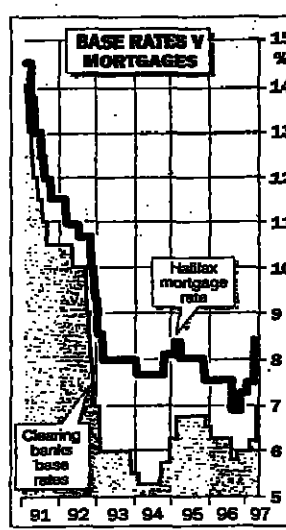
CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Card type	Interest per month	APR	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	0.64%N	7.90%N	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 105000	0.84%N	7.90%N	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829100	1.00%	14.00%	£12

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9986	12.6% A	£183.75	£166.38
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.9%	£189.48	£166.54
Alliance & Leic Grp 0980 626262	13.30%	£187.73	£167.55

NB: A = Minimum age 22 years; B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System; C = no interest free period; F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable); N = Introductory rate for a limited period only; Interest paid on maturity; F = By Post only. * RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING. Source: Moneyfacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01992 500 677)



NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At the rates	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c	1.50	20% 0.50	10-10,000**		0845 845000
Investment A/c	4.75	1.20 1.00	10-10,000**	1mth	0845 845000
Income Bonds*	6.50	5.20	3,502.00-25,000**	3mth	0845 845000
First Opt Bond	8.75	5.40	4,051.00-20,000**		0845 845000
44th Issue Cert	5.35		100-10,000	8day	0845 845000
Children's Bond	8.75		25-1,000	1mth	0845 845000
Gen End Rate	3.51				0845 845000
Capital Bonds	6.85	5.32-8.99	100-250,000	8day	0845 845000
11th Ind Unlinked	2.75		100-10,000	8day	0845 845000
Pennine Bond	5.00	5.60-6.20	500-50,000	8day	0845 845000

* First LTV (LTV) of 80% of net net free, net net free up to £100. ** Unlinked additional index for investment products. *Tax free. *Rates gross and will be charged when held for 5 years. **Net bonus for £50,000 - £100,000 p.a. addition to £1 and £2 holdings. *Taxable but credit in full. *£500-100,000 earn higher rates. *Traded rates apply.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance.

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Canada Life	£9,034	£10,130	£11,620	£13,620
Sun Life of Can	£9,082	£10,122	£11,584	£13,584
Standard Life	£9,044	£10,136	£11,584	£13,584
Scott Widows	£9,100	£10,120	£11,500	£13,500
Sun Life	£9,922	£10,048	£11,559	£13,559

SINGLE LIFE	Female:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential	£9,386	£9,205	£10,649	£12,649
General	£9,227	£9,159	£10,437	£12,437
Scott Widows	£9,250	£9,159	£10,437	£12,437
Sun Life of Can	£9,306	£9,205	£10,649	£12,649
Canada Life	£9,325	£9,151	£10,383	£12,383

JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male:	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Scott Widows	£9,227	£9,424	£9,091	£9,091
Sun Life of Can	£9,511	£9,511	£9,360	£9,360
General	£9,855	£9,855	£9,412	£9,412
Equity Life	£9,807	£9,807	£9,197	£9,197
Prudential	£9,901	£9,901	£9,178	£9,178

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 891 3000)

Statistics compiled by Jacqui Spray

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers rates by EBay's Guides Ltd. (0171 733 88482)

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Newbury	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 1 yr
01635 43676				
Manfield	2.20	£25-250k	90	6% disc-Bn 1.49%
01246 202055				6 mth, 0.95% 1 yr
Clay Cross	5.25	£15-100k	95	3.0% discount for 1 year
01246 862120				
Banks				
Bank of Ireland	0.99	£20-145k	95	6.77% disc 6 mths
01189 510100				3% disc 6 mths
Midland Bank	5.99	to £150k	95	Fixed to 31.1.00
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GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME Rates as at June 19, 1997

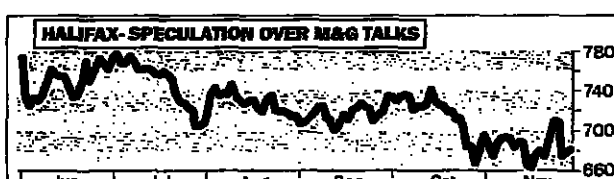
Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
5,000	AIG Life 6.38	6.75
10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.80
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
2 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.00
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
3 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	5.90
3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
20,000	Hambro Assured	6.75
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.80
4 Years		
1,000	Hambro Assured	6.10
3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.15
10,000	Hambro Assured	6.05
50,000	Hambro Assured	6.60

Source: Chamberlain de Bro 0171 424 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Mid	9.38%	120.50	7.780	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.580%	142.75	7.780	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	167.50	7.780	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	167.75	7.750	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.180%	156.75	7.740	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	151.25	7.770	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.380%	172.50	7.750	100.28	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	141.50	7.800	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.580%	165.50	7.830	100.45	1,000
Skipston	12.780%	168.00	7.660	100.48	1,000
Northorn Rock	12.830%	162.50	7.770	100.14	1,000
PERPETUAL SUBORDINATED BONDS					
Chaff & Gloucester	11.750%	155.25	7.570	100.96	50,000
Halifax	8.750%	113.50	7.710	100.62	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	149.25	8.040	100.28	50,000
Halifax	13.830%	180.00	7.570	100.00	50,000
Bristol & West	13.380%	171.50	7.800	100.34	1,000

PIBS Permanent interest-bearing shares. Source: NetWest Markets



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Chelsea 0800 281291	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 12.00
Networkwide 0800 302010	5.75	to £300k	90	2.35% discount for 2 years
Britannia 0800 526350	5.74	no max	80	2-year fix
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed for 6 mth, 3% disc-6 mths
Bristol & West 0117 979 2222	2.90	£15-No Max	90	Fixed to 1.11.98

Marianne Curphey explains how the current stock market crisis in Japan has arisen

Shadows in the land of rising sums

Turmoil in the Asian markets, sharp falls in the Nikkei 225 index and, this week, the collapse of one of Japan's biggest brokerage houses — is there more bad news to come from the Far East? Those investors who were seduced by predictions three years ago that Japan's recovery was just around the corner and by forecasts that the economic upturn was overdue will now be sitting on large losses. *Weekend Money* asks whether there is more pain to come, and how Japan will sort out its troubles this time.

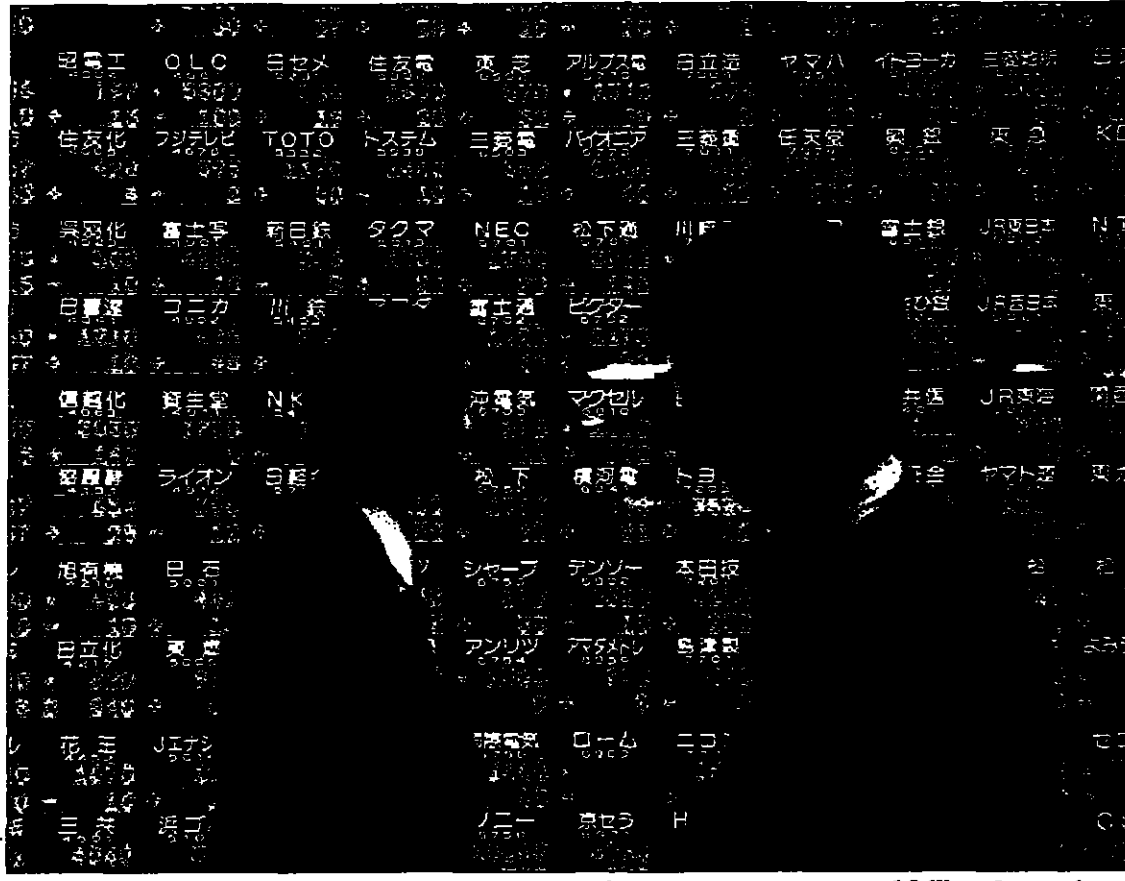
Q What has caused the turmoil in the Japanese markets?

A The Japanese stock market escaped the 1987 crash suffered by both the UK and US and soared ahead in 1988 and 1989. In 1990 the yen rose strongly against the dollar, making Japanese exports more expensive and reducing profits for manufacturing companies. At the same time, interest rates rose and the value of equities began to fall, and the Nikkei 225 stock market average lost almost half its value in a year.

A further fall in equities came in 1991 when the Gulf War denied Japanese companies the oil imports on which they depended heavily. Then in 1995 the country began to emerge from recession and pundits were selling hard the story of a Japanese recovery.

Unfortunately for those investors who bought in at that time, the Japanese Government decided that the economy was doing so well that ministers raised taxes. This had the effect of taking 2 per cent out of the economy.

Further pressures in the form of a property boom and collapse, and international speculators moving in to bet on the value of the yen and other Far Eastern currencies, have taken their toll on the Nikkei, which from a high of almost 40,000 in 1990 has now fallen to close at 16,636 this week. Over the past month alone, the Nikkei has dropped 5 per cent.



Sea of red: shell-shocked Tokyo shareholders look on in dismay as screens reveal falling share prices

Q What effect has the collapse of Yamaichi, Japan's fourth largest brokerage house, had on the markets?

A Yamaichi collapsed on Monday under a ¥3.2 trillion (£15 billion) mountain of debt, triggering falls in the FTSE 100 index in the UK and the Dow Jones on Wall Street.

Although there have been concerns for several years about serious problems in the banking sector, Yamaichi's closure came after revelations of the brokers' huge hidden

debts, known as *tabashi*. Rumours about these practices have been rife for several years. The practice is designed to conceal losses from regulators and companies' favoured clients.

It involves shuffling around losses on a favoured client's account to another account, by manipulating the records or setting up dummy companies to "buy" the loss.

Once the news of the debts became public, foreign credit agencies began downgrading Yamaichi, banks recalled their loans and frightened

investors started to withdraw their money.

Q Has the Japanese Government taken any action?

A On Wednesday Japanese ministers took the rare step of appealing for calm, amid concern that investors were losing confidence in the country's financial institutions. Although the country's finance minister and the Governor of the Bank of Japan asked people to "act sensibly", history has shown that panic can

easily grip stock markets. The problem, according to Iain Allan, director of strategy at the Royal Bank of Scotland, is that the Japanese government system is a collective one, with no individual willing to take a lone gamble on sorting out the mess the economy is in. He believes the burden will fall on the United States Government, which will eventually force the Japanese to push through reforms.

Q What sort of action will the Japanese have to take?

A Japanese ministers have pledged not to allow financial meltdown to take place and there is widespread belief that public money will have to be used in some form to resolve the banking system's bad loan problems. Politicians have until now been reluctant to use public money for the banking system because a huge outcry greeted a decision by the Government last year to use tax money to help to wind up failed mortgage firms. There will be more support if the money is used to protect depositors rather than to rescue firms from mismanagement.

The options available include Bank of Japan loans, tax revenues, and money from the Government's postal savings-funded Fiscal Investment and Loan Programme.

Q How have the Nikkei 225 and the FTSE 100 indices performed in this turbulence?

A At the beginning of October the Nikkei 225 index stood at 17,842.16. It hit a low point in November of 15,082.52 and now stands at 16,636. This compares with a high seven years ago of 39,158.7. The FTSE 100 index, meanwhile, reached a high of 5,330.8 in October this year but dropped as low as 4,711 a fortnight ago as a currency crisis which started in the Far Eastern markets and was driven by speculators spread to both the United Kingdom and the United States.

It's only for the brave with a long-term view

Fund managers and investment advisers admit to feeling "battered and bruised" by the revelations of corruption and debt at the very heart of Japan's economy. Many had been taking a very positive view of Japan at the beginning of the summer, since the UK and US stock markets had reached record highs and Japan was still looking cheap.

They are now urging the advice they gave to clients to test the water by putting a proportion of their portfolio into what appeared to be an undervalued market. Others see the Nikkei's tumble and the drop in the value of Japanese stocks as a buying opportunity. However, investing in Japan now is only for the brave and those who can afford a long-term view.

Most analysts agree that there will be further failures of banks or stockbroking firms and more turmoil before the economy and the fortunes of the stock market start to improve.

Those who are bullish about the market urge investors to pick unit or investment trusts which concentrate on the "blue chips" — good quality companies like Sony — which will receive international support.

Jason Hollands, a director of BESI Investment, says those people who have already bought into Japan should sit tight. "There really is no alternative," he said. "Now that the banking sector's problems have been brought out into the open there is hope that they

will be sorted out. At last, slowly, Japan will be brought into the real world. In the past, companies with financial problems have closed overseas branches rather than sack workers in Japan. Now Japan is coming to terms with the fact that unemployment is part of a modern economy. Japan may be about to discover Thatcherism."

Iain Allan, the Royal Bank of Scotland's director of strategy adds that although manufacturing companies have learnt to be lean and mean, banks are still full of people with no real jobs who are kept on because it would be a great embarrassment to fire them.

Mr Hollands forecasts that the coming months will see fund managers buying up quality companies and recommends the Newton Japan unit trust, which invests in only 40 companies. "This is a market for good stockpickers," he said.

Over the past three years, Newton Japan's unit trust has lost 13 per cent of its value, compared with Schroder Tokyo, which has lost almost 20 per cent over the same period, and Fidelity Japan, at 24 per cent. Although these are hardly cheering figures, he believes Newton's narrow focus will protect it from exposure to some of the worst of Japan's economic problems. For the more wary investors, a policy of "wait and see" is the best option.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

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All eyes on CGT future

Gavin Lumsden on hopes and fears over changes to capital taxation

Judging by their reaction to the "green" Budget on Tuesday, accountants felt at a loss to know what to say. Deprived of any stimulus in the Chancellor's speech, they have started conjuring the most frightening of familiar spectres — it's Gordon Brown, he's back and this time he wants another multi-billion slug out of your pension fund.

The cause of the concern is capital gains tax (CGT), just one of many subjects upon which the Iron Chancellor had precious little to say. Having launched a review of CGT in his July Budget, Mr Brown stopped taking consultation on it last month. This week he announced that he would deliver a verdict in the proper Budget next spring.

Meanwhile investors and their financial advisers are on tenterhooks. All that is known about CGT reform so far is that it fits in the centre

of the Government's drive to create a long-term investment culture in Britain.

At the moment CGT plays a relatively minor role on the fiscal stage, taxing people on investment gains over £6,300 a year at the individual's highest marginal rate for income tax. Last year it affected 100,000 people, who paid £1.2 billion into the government coffers.

However, CGT is complex and costly to administer, and is widely expected to be replaced by a two-tier system that would penalise short-term investment gains while exempting profits made from

assets held for more than ten years.

Elsbeth May, tax partner in KPMG, believes that the rate of CGT should be cut by 4 per cent for every year an asset is held. This would prevent the tax distorting investment decisions, she says.

None of this is particularly controversial. What has got financial experts worried is the prospect of the tax being levied on pension funds, a move that would raise between £1 billion and £1.5 billion for the Inland Revenue each year. This would be on

top of the £3.6 billion smash-and-grab raid that the Chancellor pulled off in July when he prevented pension funds from reclaiming the 20 per cent tax on dividends from shares.

Maurice Fitzpatrick, of Chantrey Vellacott, said: "For every £2 of UK equity held by individuals, £4 is held by pension funds. From an intellectual point of view, if the Chancellor is serious about erasing short-termism, he would have to include pension funds." Mr Fitzpatrick says that the Government has already shown itself to be disposed to imposing a dis-

gusted tax via pension funds and that it would find the money useful in achieving its aim of setting a 10p basic rate of tax.

John Whiting, of Price Waterhouse, agrees. He said: "CGT has traditionally always been a gap plugger in the Government's anti-tax avoidance strategy and not a revenue raiser. However, I feel the reform is processing far more in the way of the latter."

Ending the CGT exemption that occupational and personal pension funds currently enjoy would be a politically sensitive move for the Gov-

ernment, which is already committed to pensions reform as part of its plan to encourage people to save more for their retirement.

The National Association of Pension Funds, whose members manage the £300 billion of assets that would be affected, rightly claims that pension funds are already long-term investors. Stamp duty on purchases is sufficient discouragement from engaging in speculative trading. However, the association says that funds need maximum investment flexibility to provide income for pensioners.

In other areas, the Chancellor's lack of detail may be good news for investors. Mr Brown did not, as expected, abolish reinvestment relief, which allows people to escape CGT on investment gains by reinvesting their profits in unquoted companies. Investors and providers of enterprise investment schemes and venture capital trusts, which thrive on this relief, live to see another day, it seems.

If the Government does move to a two-tier system for CGT, it may herald the end of the indexation calculation, much to the relief of investors plagued by its complexity since its introduction in 1982. Indexation allows investors to use rises in the retail price index to reduce their taxable gains. For example, an investment bought in 1992 at £1,000 and sold today at £5,000 would produce a gain of £4,000. If inflation has been 20 per cent, investors can subtract 20 per cent of their original investment (£200) cutting their taxable gain to £3,800. Accountants say that this sum will be a nightmare for people completing self-assessment forms. Besides, they add, if the Government succeeds in keeping inflation low, it will become increasingly irrelevant.

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If your will is out of date and you have yet to sort out what will happen to your financial affairs after your death, the "green" Budget last Tuesday should have been your wake-up call.

The Chancellor's decision not to change the inheritance tax rules in the Budget means that an overhaul is likely to be top of his list in April, and you have four months in which to make the most of the current generous allowances.

Gordon Brown is believed to regard the present system as unsatisfactory and unfair since it is, effectively, a voluntary tax paid only by those who have failed to plan properly and tends to hit the middle classes harder than the seriously rich. For example, a man living in the South of England with £100,000 of investments and a house worth £200,000 would be liable for tax at 40 per cent on £85,000, that is £34,000.

The Treasury loses millions of pounds of potential revenue from inheritance tax every year because skilled accountants can maximise the exemptions under the current system. Reforming inheritance tax would be a simple way for the Chancellor to raise more revenue without penalising the low paid.

At present, inheritance tax is charged at 40 per cent on all assets worth more than £215,000 in an estate. About 1.5 million people

Wake-up call to protect your heirs

Marianne Curphey says Brown may reform inheritance tax

living in the UK will share inheritance windfalls of £26 billion this year, a similar sum to the recent windfalls from the Halifax, Norwich Union, Woolwich and Northern Rock flotations put together.

So with four months to go before any potential changes are made, what can those with estates and those who expect windfalls do to reduce their tax liability?

Maurice Fitzpatrick, a senior tax partner with Chantrey Vellaott, the accountant, says careful financial planning by the wealthy could reduce substantially, or even eliminate, inheritance tax liability by giving away assets during one's lifetime.

CURRENT RULES

■ Making transfers from your estate.

At present, if an individual's estate is worth £215,000 or less when he or she dies, there is no tax to pay. Similarly, gifts of £3,000 per donor a year are free of tax. Anything over that potentially becomes liable to tax. If you do not take advantage of this exemption each year, it is lost. However, if you

make a gift of more than £3,000 it will not attract tax as long as the donor lives for more than seven years after so doing.

This is known as the potentially exempt transfer (PET). The growth in the value of the PET is excluded from any assessment of the value of the estate from the first day of the transfer.

When inheritance tax is being assessed, any amount over £215,000 is taxed at 40 per cent. On an estate of £300,000 there would be £85,000 tax to pay, while on an estate of £2 million, more than £700,000 would be due.

■ If you leave money to charity, the donation is exempt from inheritance tax.

■ Capital gains tax liability. Even though making a transfer is usually a wise move, it may cost money in the form of capital gains tax, says David Aaron, who runs a financial advisory service in Milton Keynes. When you make a gift the Inland Revenue regards it as a disposal for capital gains tax purposes. The CGT allowance for

each individual this year is £6,500 and you will pay tax at your highest rate on the balance if your assets have appreciated by more than this figure since you began investing in them.

Mr Aaron says: "It is possible to get around CGT by using 'hold-over' relief via a discretionary trust." An accountant or tax adviser and some financial advisers can do this for you.

LIKELY CHANGES

■ Abolishing the seven-year rule/abolishing PETs.

The Government could abolish the seven-year rule in April's Budget and impose inheritance tax on any gift transferred during your lifetime. Some tax experts suggest that instead of getting rid of the seven-year rule he could extend the timescale so that any gifts given 20 years before your death would be exempt from inheritance tax. However, it would be very difficult for people to make the most of the latter option since it would be hard

to estimate how much money they would need to keep to fund their own lifestyle over two decades.

Alternatively, the tax might be calculated on the cumulative total of lifetime gifts plus the value of the estate at the time of death.

Mr Fitzpatrick thinks that the Chancellor might impose a lower limit from the current 40 per cent on the first £100,000 over and above £215,000 nil band. Mr Brown could target the seriously wealthy by raising inheritance tax to 60 per cent of all estates worth more than £1 million.

John Battersby, personal financial services partner of KPMG, the accountants, believes abolishing lifetime gifts would cause an administrative burden. He said: "It does not seem realistic to expect taxpayers to keep records of all gifts throughout their lives as abolition of the rule could require."

■ Abolition of business property relief and agricultural relief. It is currently possible to siphon off some assets that would normally be subject to inheritance tax by

using schemes that trigger tax relief, Mr Aaron says.

These include excluded property trusts, where someone who is not domiciled in the UK can make investments offshore that will be exempt from inheritance tax for ever, even if you become a UK resident later.

Business and agricultural property relief were designed to prevent the break-up of bona fide family businesses, but the Government is concerned that these reliefs may be abused. Both reliefs are likely to be scrapped in any reform of inheritance tax.

■ Changing a will after death. It is possible to avoid inheritance tax by changing a will after the person has died to make it more tax-efficient. Although this is used in cases where people had not updated a will for many years and family circumstances had changed, the Government believes some people are abusing the spirit of the law to avoid tax.

ACTION BY APRIL

1. Draw up a will.
2. Make an estimate of your wealth.

3. Use existing exemptions, including the nil rate band.
4. Make use of potentially exempt transfers (PETs).
5. Invest in nil or lower taxed assets, which include agricultural land, private trading companies and woodland.
6. Create a lifetime discretionary trust to ensure that when one half of a married couple dies, the inheritance passed to the survivor is not taxed when the survivor dies.
7. Leave Lloyd's assets to your children.

OTHER POINTS

Mr Aaron, and Mike Warburton, of Grant Thornton, both highlight the importance of incorporating death-in-service benefits from employers into your inheritance tax planning.

For example, suppose your spouse receives a large sum as part of the benefits from your occupational pension scheme when you die. When your spouse dies, they will then be caught for inheritance tax.

Mr Aaron makes the suggestion that death benefits are paid into a suitable trust that will enable them to bypass the estate of the surviving spouse, but without denying the spouse income or capital from the trust.



Inheritance problems: the late Princess, with Prince Harry and Prince William

Having a will of your own

The only way to ensure assets stay in the family is to keep your legal wishes up-to-date, says Susan Emmett

Lawyers still cannot understand why Diana, Princess of Wales did not update her will after her £17 million divorce settlement. Had she done so, she could have ensured that her heirs, the two Princes, would have avoided much of the hefty inheritance tax they now face.

There are several ways of avoiding inheritance tax, most of which involve giving away your assets during your life in order to reduce the value of your estate. But this is not always ideal, especially if you are still young.

Clive Scott-Hopkins, director at Towry Law Financial Services, said: "If you cannot 'beat' it through divestment, then 'beat' it instead through a trust life policy."

According to Mr Scott-Hopkins the Princess should have taken out a life policy in trust for William and Harry to fund her large potential IHT liability, which on £17 million is about £6.7 million. The trust, created by means of her updated will, would have cancelled out capital gains tax on her death also. A low-cost whole life policy costs around £6,000 per £1 million for a fit 36-year-old female, which would have

translated into an annual premium of about £40,000 for the Princess.

As inheritance tax is payable up to seven years after such an arrangement, she could have taken out insurance policies to protect against tax liability had she died within that period.

Yet, according to Richard Bark-Jones, a partner at Morecroft Urquhart in Liverpool, it is fairly unusual for such a young person to consider these measures. "Normally an average 36-year-old would not be thinking of setting up these sorts of trusts," he said.

"But then again an average 36-year-old does not have a £17 million divorce settlement."

However surprising it may seem that the Princess did not update her will and make suitable arrangements for reducing IHT liability, she is not alone. Only one in three people ever makes a will and many fail to review them after a life-changing event such as marriage or divorce. Mar-

riage automatically invalidates a will made before the wedding.

Although the full details of the Princess's will have not been disclosed, it is known that she wished the majority of her estate to go to her two sons. It is unlikely that this would have changed in a new will but lawyers, such as Mr Scott-Hopkins, are keen to emphasise the importance of keeping your will up-to-date.

Although marriage invalidates a will, divorce does not but it negates any benefits to the former spouse. Therefore, it is important to rethink who your new beneficiaries will be and how to minimise liability.

If your estate is straightforward, organising your own will can be relatively easy. High street stationers do sell DIY packs. But solicitors advise care because a will needs to meet certain legal requirements for it to be valid. Unless it is witnessed by two people

who are not beneficiaries, for instance, it is worthless.

If your estate is more complex and your assets worth more than £215,000, the threshold for inheritance tax, then a trip to the solicitors is certainly recommended as he or she can give you guidance on how to mitigate inheritance tax liability and help to set up trusts.

You do not need to be a Spencer to have an estate worth more than £215,000. By the time you count the house, the furniture you put in it and the car, the threshold will quickly disappear.

Inheritance tax may take a large chunk of your estate but dying intestate could mean your heirs get even less. If you do not make a will, the Government will do it for you. The law only recognises relatives with a direct blood link so your hard-earned wealth might end up in the taxman's pocket as there are strict rules dictating where your money goes if you die intestate.

An ordinary will costs around £50 and a couple making similar wills would be charged £75. Personal recommendation is the best way to choose a solicitor. If friends and colleagues cannot help, lists of solicitors can be found in bank libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the solicitors' Family Law Association. Will-writing services, insurance companies, building societies and banks can also help with preparing wills.

After making an appointment, it helps to list all your assets. Include insurance policies and any property that you own, as well as valuable possessions. You will also have to list Premium Bonds, although they are not transferable.

Once your will is sorted out you will need to appoint an executor who will ensure your wishes are carried out after your death. Your bank or your solicitors will act as executors but as both will charge you for the privilege, it is best to appoint a close friend of the family, a relative or grown-up children. You can have more than one executor and they can be a beneficiary of your estate.

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The importance of keeping your will up to date



Caroline Merrell on the changes facing married couples and single parents

Working mum welcomes help

ALAN WELLS



Shirley Hutchinson, a 28-year-old single mother from North London, is one of whom the money for childcare is targeted. As a freelance record production assistant, Ms Hutchinson's hours are erratic and she will often work beyond normal school hours. Her son Sebastian will have to be looked

after for a couple of hours after school and she said she welcomed any change that would make childcare simpler and cheaper. She said: "The out-of-school club costs around £5 a session. Over a month the costs could be as high as £100, anything that makes this cheaper would be welcomed."

Brown turns attention to family matters

The family was very much the focus of the Chancellor's Budget statement this week. Gordon Brown proposed a radical overhaul of the family credit system that could bring to an end the independent taxation for husbands and wives introduced only six years ago. The move could mean a rebellion among the millions of dual-earners middle class couples who voted Labour into power.

Mr Brown also unveiled a £300 million package for childcare, aimed at increasing the number of places in after-school clubs. The latter move was seen by some as a step towards granting tax relief on the costs of childcare.

The overhaul of the present system of family credit will mean that workers will receive the benefit in their pay packet in the form of reduced tax — it will be termed a working-family tax credit (WFTC).

Family credit is currently paid to families with income of less than £77 a week. The basic benefit is worth £47.65 per family. Benefits of between £12 a week and £34 a week are also paid out for each dependent child. Around £2 billion a year is spent on family credit and it is worth an average of £57 a week for each family that claims it.

In America, where there is no independent taxation, the WFTC is based on the joint income of husband and wife. Reintegration of family income for tax purposes could

mean that a couple with partners each earning £20,000 a year would become liable to higher-rate tax, adding £4,000 to their annual tax bill.

However, Mr Brown emphasised that no final decision had been made. "If you look at America, for example, their earned income tax credit is now available to 18 million people, whereas in Britain family credit is available to only 700,000 people. So we want to look at how we can help more low-paid workers to gain benefits from their work," he said.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies, the independent body, said that WFTC would be almost impossible to administer unless the entire family income was taken in to account. If it was not, it could lead to a situation where, for example, a low-paid secretary benefited from the tax credit despite the fact that her husband earned a substantial sum. The IFS also said the problems could arise as the tax credit would inevitably end up in the hands of the working partner — usually the male. It would not necessarily reach its target, the family.

The Government also gave an unexpected boost to the childcare lobby. Mr Brown unveiled plans to spend a total of £300 million over five years on delivering help to working parents. The money will be spent on setting up a total of 30,000 out-of-school clubs, which will provide one million new childcare places. The cash will also be used to train

50,000 unemployed people as child carers. The changes will be particularly helpful to single parents. Gingerbread, the charity that campaigns on behalf of single-parent families, said there are around 1.7 million single-parent families bringing up 2.9 children, representing nearly a quarter of all households with dependent children.

Many single parents are dependent on state benefits, many find it difficult to work because the costs of childcare make it economically unviable. At the moment, there are about 3,400 out-of-school clubs providing childcare for around 150,000 children.

A spokeswoman said the £300 million giveaway by the Chancellor was extremely welcome. She said it pointed to a Government that was more sympathetic to helping working parents. She said: "We would welcome an opportunity to consult on who the carers should be." She also pointed out that some of the £300 million should be used to make sure that the childcare places were available to the poorest people.

Harriet Harman, Secretary of State for Social Security, said: "It is an investment which could transform all parents' lives, particularly lone parents. Next year, the first year of the programme, we will make £40 million available."

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BUSINESS NEWS PAGES 27-31

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Poor miss out on 10% tax rate

The Chancellor again reiterated the Government's commitment to a 10 per cent starting rate of tax in the green Budget (Caroline Merrell writes).

Gordon Brown said: "To maximise rewards from work, a 10p starting rate of tax and a reform of benefit tapers will be introduced when it is prudent to do so." In principle, accountants welcomed the pledge on the 10 per cent tax rate, but said the richest would benefit most from the low tax band.

The Government gave no indication about how it intends to fund a low starting rate of tax, or how it would interact with the current tax structure. At the moment,

every individual can earn £4,045 before they pay any tax, the next £4,100 attracts 20 per cent tax, while the next £21,999 attracts 23 per cent tax.

Those who earn more than £30,145 have to pay tax at the highest rate of 40 per cent, on anything above that amount. John Whiting, tax partner at Price Waterhouse, said: "In principle it is a good idea. But it will not solve everything." He pointed out that the very low paid were not interested in tax rates. He claimed they were far more concerned about losing benefits when they started work.

Mr Whiting believes the Government could fund the tax cut by not allowing the two

million or so 40 per cent tax payers to benefit from the lower rate of tax.

John Battersby, of KPMG, also welcomed the proposed changes, but said the pledge by the Government was of little use, as there was no detail to back it up.

According to figures from KPMG, if the 20 per cent tax band was simply exchanged for a 10 per cent tax band, using this year's figures, the most that could be saved would be £410. Anyone earning over £8,045 would benefit from this maximum saving. Anyone earning under this amount would save less. For example, someone earning £7,500 would only save £345.

Brown's day of reckoning for Isa

As the nation embarks on the Christmas spending spree, the Chancellor wants us to pause a while to think about saving. Next Tuesday sees the publication of a consultation document on the individual savings account (Isa), the replacement for the Pep and the Tessa.

Those who can think about thrift instead of turkey's may not be overwhelmed by Gordon Brown's generosity. There is speculation that the tax relief may be restricted to 10 per cent.

The Halifax, the largest provider of Tessa and of Pep mortgages, is questioning the timing of the Isa launch, scheduled for April 1999. The Halifax points out that many institutions will be preoccupied with the reorganisation of systems for the millennium.

The Isa proposals must reconcile a number of conflicting interests. The account will be primarily designed to appeal to those on low incomes but must not alienate better off investors who may also wish to take advantage of the new account.

John Whiting, tax partner at Price Waterhouse, the accountants, says: "The Chancellor must make sure that there is some tax incentive for the average investor, the type of person already saving in Peps."

"If the incentives are not sufficiently appealing, then those with money in Peps will not be interested in transferring into Isas. If they decide to cash in their Pep holdings, there could be serious consequences for the stock market. There would also be implications for the consumer spending figures if they decided to embark on a spending spree."

ANNE ASHWORTH

Barclays claims 1m new account holders

About one million disenfranchised people have opened accounts at Barclays this year after their banks failed to give good service (Susan Emmett writes).

Disgruntled customers no longer put up with bad banking and are switching like never before. But some stay with the traditional. Barclays says it has had an "outstanding" year.

But increased competition on the high street from newcomers such as Virgin One, Virgin Direct's new account combining a flexible mortgage and current account, means account holders are spoilt for choice. First Direct, Midland's telephone banking arm, welcomed 130,000 new account holders and some 150,000 joined the Halifax, the country's largest building society.

Jodi Cornofsky, 23, is one of the disaffected customers who left her old bank because it failed to offer the service she needed. Jodi joined First Direct for the convenience of telephone banking.

Gloves are off, page 54



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THE TIMES WEEKEND

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 29 1997

Can Ffion save the Tories?

Nicholas Wood and Katherine Bergen look at the woman the Conservatives hope will inject glamour into their blighted party

In less than a month Ffion Jenkins, once nicknamed the "Princess of Wales" by jealous classmates at her Welsh comprehensive, will marry William Hague amid the gothic splendour of the House of Commons crypt.

Conservative spin doctors, salivating at the prospect of a touch of glamour in their lacklustre team, are already suggesting that the political wedding of the decade will prove the platform for a Tory recovery.

Ffion, aged 29, is blonde, pretty, clever, discreet and fiercely ambitious. Known as "Jolly Jenkins" to her friends, she has a mega-watt smile and, according to her dress designer, the figure of Marilyn Monroe.

To Conservatives who have never quite got over the demise of their last high-octane blonde, this is an enticing prospect. Margaret Thatcher was once famously described by François Mitterrand as having the eyes of Caligula but the mouth of Miss Monroe. Battle-scarred Tories, still shellshocked by the scale of their election defeat, are hoping that Ffion will bring some of that long-lost star quality to their rather dreary little party.

As *The Times* disclosed earlier this week, Mr Hague has yet to make much of an impression on the British public. Groups of voters interviewed in depth for the Tory high command have likened him to a dormouse or a Yorkshire terrier — a rather brutal way of saying that he has made little impact.

Mr Hague's image-makers hope that, with the help of Ffion, the wedding ceremony on December 19 in the crypt chapel, also known as St Mary's Undercroft, in the Palace of Westminster, will help to put their man on the political map.

As befits a former civil servant, Ffion is playing her cards close to her chest, so far giving no interviews about her fast-approaching big day. Wedding invitations have gone out to about 200 close friends and family, and the wedding breakfast — a loose term as the meal itself takes place after the 2pm ceremony — will also be staged inside the palace, at Speaker's House. The invitations stipulate morning dress but no confetti. They take the

unusual appearance of a souvenir booklet tied by a cream bow with her parents Emyr and Myra Jenkins calling upon guests in English on the right of the centre pages and Welsh on the left.

The marriage ceremony of Ffion Jenkins to William Jefferson Hague will be bilingual. This is hardly surprising, for Ffion is best known as the woman who taught William the rudiments of the Welsh language. A leading light in the SWS society — Social, Welsh and Sexy — she was determined that he should not repeat the mistake of her former boss John Redwood, whose career nose-dived when, as Welsh Secretary, he was exposed as not knowing the words of the Welsh national anthem.

When William took over the top job in Cardiff, Ffion spent two hours singing to him until he was word perfect. We are expected to believe that this tryst — at the White Horse pub in Betws-y-Coed on a hot summer's day in 1995 — was purely professional.

Whether it was or not, William, in keeping with his stolid Yorkshire background, took a while to make up his mind. A year passed before he asked her out, but after that he showed a decisiveness one

would expect in a possible future prime minister. Within four months, and three months before the election, he had proposed marriage. He is now taking lessons in Welsh from a professional tutor.

Ffion was a brunette at Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf, a Welsh-speaking high school in Llandaff, Cardiff. But although her hair-style has moved with the times, and a dash of peroxide, she has stayed true to her roots in the upper echelons of the Crachach, a network of well-connected Welsh-speaking families who run the Principality's quangos and institutions. To those who regard them as "petty gentry, conceited upstarts and snobs", they are better known as the Taffia.

One friend describes her as "Welsh Nationalist with a small n", which might make for some excitable pillow talk about the merits of William's distaste for devolution. But the truth appears to be that Ffion's enthusiasm for things Welsh

Continued on page 3



Ffion, aged 29, is blonde, pretty, clever, discreet and fiercely ambitious. Known as "Jolly Jenkins", she has the figure of Marilyn Monroe

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Dons who dice with Mr Chips

Cambridge
can't resist Bill
Gates, or his
money, says
Philip Delves
Broughton

An unseasonably large crowd parked their bicycles in the front outside Lady Mitchell Hall, one of Cambridge's largest lecture rooms, earlier this month. They had come to hear Professor Quentin Skinner, who was giving his first lecture as the university's Regius Professor of Modern History.

Skinner's lectures have always been crowd-pullers. From the moment he was elected into a college fellowship at 21, straight after graduation. This time, however, as he spoke about the 17th-century argument between Hobbes and Harrington on the subject of liberty, there was something different in the air. The packed hall and the style of Skinner's talk, delivered in measured sentences without a single visual aid, offered the most stylish possible rebuff to Cambridge science.

"It was extraordinary," says Professor Gillian Beer, president of Clare Hall and the chairman of this year's Booker Prize panel. "There were people hanging from the rafters. It was a classic, big-argument, arts and humanities lecture which showed that the scientists do not have the monopoly on good teaching."

Skinner's lecture offered a rare chance for those in the arts and humanities to regroup. As so often in Cambridge's 700-year history, in the past year, the arts have been feeling science's boot on their neck. This time the pressure is greater than ever. Cambridge is fast becoming the nursery for the global computer revolution, and both town and gown are struggling to cope.

Last month, Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft and the world's richest businessman, visited the university after donating £10 million for a new university computer laboratory and announcing the investment of £50 million over ten years in a research and development centre in Cambridge which would draw on university expertise.

It was like a papal blessing for those who, since the early Seventies, had turned Cambridge and its surrounding area into Silicon Fen, an East



Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft and the world's richest businessman, visited Cambridge last month after donating £10 million for a new university computer laboratory

Anglian version of California's Silicon Valley, the birthplace of the modern computer industry. There are around 600 high-tech firms in and around the city, employing 19,000 people, many at the leading edge of biotechnology and computer science. Gates had picked them to join him in the van of what he calls the new industrial revolution.

Gates's visit, however, made many in the university uncomfortable. The meeting represented for some the capitulation of Cambridge science to commerce. And the boom in high-tech industries around Cambridge, which owes so much to the international prestige of the university, is threatening life in the city,

which remains at heart a small, medieval East Anglian market town.

But traffic congestion, shortage of housing and lack of an infrastructure to cope with a rapidly increasing population is having a terrible effect on the city. Excessive tourism and lazy planning are turning Silicon Fen into an increasingly unhealthy and unattractive environment.

Peter Dawe, a local businessman who has launched the Cambridge is Full campaign, says: "Cambridge has grown incrementally with little overall planning strategy. It is now being ruined faster than ever."

University recruitment, for the first time, is becoming a

problem too. Professor Skinner, who is also vice-master of Christ's College, says: "Academics, particularly those with families, are put off by the living conditions here."

Dons who could once afford a pleasant house in the centre of Cambridge are being forced out into ugly commuter villages like Sawton, Milton and Bourne, as the price properties in town are snapped up by the swells from the high-tech industry. A way of life in which everyone in the university could walk or bicycle from home to lecture to

room to college is nearing an end. The vision of the winsome undergraduate free-wheeling down King's Parade is being replaced by one struggling on to the Park and Ride.

Cambridge's reputation in the sciences was based on the twin pillars of Newton in the 17th and 18th centuries, and Rutherford in the 20th, and perhaps more significantly on the fact that until 1848, in order to obtain a degree from the university, every undergraduate had to pass the mathematics tripos. In 1848, the Natural Science tripos was

introduced, paving the way for the study of applied physics and later engineering and inevitably computers.

The university's scientists showed for a long time the classic British ability to invent brilliantly but then to have absolutely no idea how to exploit their work. Then in 1910, W.G. Pye, a technician at the Cavendish Laboratory, set up the Cambridge Instrument Company, which is now a part of Philips. It was the most important event in the evolution of Cambridge's science-based industry. Cambridge was on its way to making hard cash out of its most precious yet vaporous of commodities — ideas. In the 1960s Trinity College built its science park

on the outskirts of the city, the first such site in England — Strathclyde in Scotland already had one. Trinity earned huge revenues from the science park as companies like Acorn Computers took off.

In the past two years, the high-tech revolution has gathered pace. American banks which specialise in high-tech and biotechnology companies have increased their presence in London to capitalise on Cambridge. Microsoft joins Sony, Olivetti and Oracle all with research centres in Cambridge or substantial investment in local firms.

Hermann Hauser, who founded Acorn Computers and will run the £10 million Microsoft venture capital

fund, said recently: "For years in Cambridge we've had the problem that small software companies didn't connect with the market in the rest of the world. Microsoft's investment means we will be able to attract more talent into Cambridge to make it the mini Silicon Valley that it deserves to be."

Cambridge, however, is drastically different from Silicon Valley in California or Redmond in Seattle, the home of Microsoft. These areas do not have to contend with Cambridge's traditions and geographical constraints, such as its surrounding green belt which makes development impossible or prohibitively expensive.

Robin Saxby, the chief executive of Advanced RISC Machines, a Cambridge company which employs 162 people in developing intellectual property for computer firms, says: "We are here because what we are doing started with the university. But it is not an easy place to expand. Nobody wants to be the first on a green field site. Who wants to be brave enough to start a new building in the middle of a fen?"

Unlike Cambridge, Silicon Valley and Redmond evolved simply to serve the computer industry. Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond have the feel of a university campus. Staff are encouraged to dress casually, the buildings are set in landscaped gardens with lakes, the atmosphere is youthful and creative, but unlike a university Microsoft is a business and its distinctive culture is also a corporate identity.

Those in Cambridge who oppose the way the university has been cosying up to the computer companies are not plain Luddites. They find it disturbing to have aggressive, secretive business organisations infiltrating what should be an open, liberal educational establishment. They also worry that the business ethos will lead to a more utilitarian approach to education where everything has to be justified in terms of cost-effectiveness.

"The mutual incomprehension between arts and science can produce hostility," says Professor Skinner. "Big business and universities will never share the same values, but in the past 15 years we have had to stop being so fastidious about taking their money because of the extent to which the state won't pay the bills. We can't afford to lose the chance of knowledge generation."

The state
won't pick
up the
bills any
more

Diana disciples will descend on her shrine

Business is already booming around Althorp as locals prepare for many more visitors, Rachel Kelly reports

While lawyers wrangle in the South African sunshine and the British tabloids publish increasingly lurid details of the Spencers' divorce, in muddy Northamptonshire the locals are preparing for a mini boom.

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has turned the spotlight on a pocket of this quiet county. Villages such as Great Brington and Nobottle, Little Brington and Chapel Brampton, which were once known only to the postman, are about to be thrust on the world stage as neighbours of Althorp, the late Princess's family home. Northampton

itself, six miles away, is fast becoming a hot destination.

Just as Gracefields in Memphis became a shrine to Elvis, and Monaco cathedral a monument to Princess Grace, so Althorp will earn worldwide renown next year when the museum, planned as a tribute to the Diana, Princess of Wales, opens in the grounds of the Spencer's family home from July 1 to August 31, the Princess's birthday.

The burial site will remain private to members of the family, although the island where the Princess lies will be on view. But what Althorp describes as an "appropriate memorial to the Princess" will be erected, and the museum —

featuring family photographs, memorabilia and cine film — will be built in the stable block in the grounds.

It is not yet known how many disciples of Diana will come to honour her, but tens, if not hundreds, of thousands are expected. At least 10,000 tourists annually pay homage to Princess Grace's burial place in Monaco, while 700,000 visit Gracefields.

Once, Northampton was just a place on the way to somewhere else. Now the town will become the gateway to Althorp. Hotels are already fielding calls from tour groups who wish to stay next summer, and there is a premium on property in the area suitable for hotel accommodation.

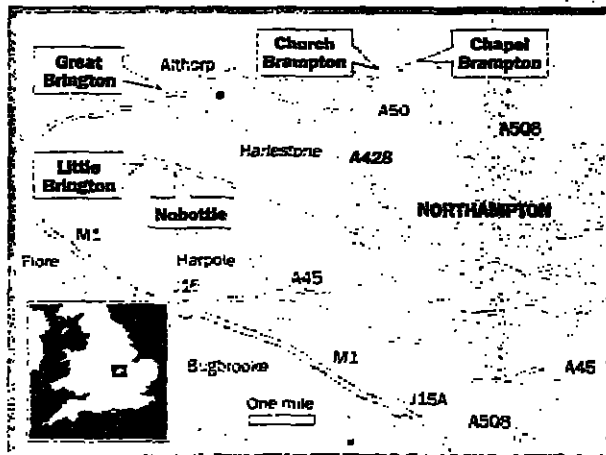
Simon Hastie, general manager of the The Marriott at Daventry Hotel at Flore, the closest hotel to the house, says: "We have had 15 enquiries from large tour groups wanting to stay in July and August. We have never had tour groups before, but they will not commit themselves until they are sure they can buy tickets into Althorp."

Hotels and inns in the area are shooting up in value. One businessman who wants to buy in the area complains that he can't find a hotel for love, nor money. "I think you could go to the market and demand at least 20 per cent more than three months ago," says a local estate agent.

John Sheppard of Robert Barry, a company specialising in the sales of hotels and inns, says pubs within ten to 15 miles of Althorp will do a



Locals are worried that the area will be damaged when the tribute museum to Diana opens, attracting hordes of visitors

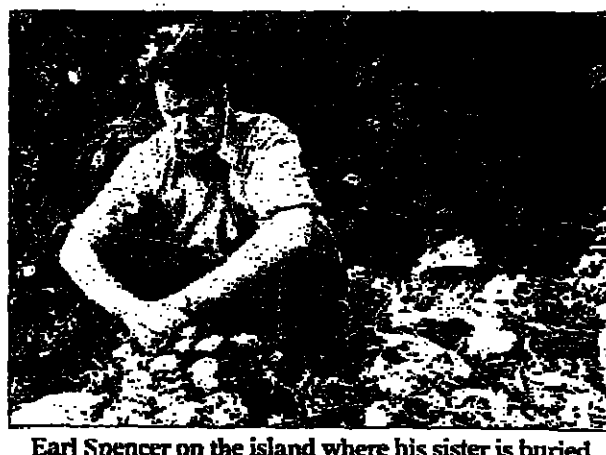


routing trade. "The pubs, particularly, because people will come on day trips."

At the Chicago Rock Café in Northampton, which opened this week, manager Kate Moravsky is expecting loads of Americans. "Groups of them will come in once they have paid their respects," she predicts. The Post Office in Great Brington, a village on the estate of Althorp park, is already seeing a steady stream of 20 to 30 visitors a day. Locals estimate that this will rise to 250 a day in the spring. The Japanese, Australians and

Americans are already buying tea towels, calendars and bookmarks from the village shop, as well as asking for anecdotes about the Princess. Many visitors come simply to pay their respects, says Ian Lowry, the church warden of Great Brington church. Despite cold weather, last weekend 100 tourists arrived at the church. Where once the building stood empty for most of the week, now local worthies man it for four hours a day to cater for the influx.

But Mr Lowry is cautious about providing facilities,



Earl Spencer on the island where his sister is buried

such as public conveniences, for the visitors, reflecting a widely held wish that the area around Althorp should not become a Althorp theme park. "If we provide the facilities, then more people will come."

Further out from Althorp, the corridor between Northampton and the estate itself is now attracting commercial interest. Stephen King from estate agents Strutt & Parker says: "We expect that some of the more traditional houses set close to the A428 may open

their doors." Some of the larger village houses open as B&Bs, and the odd gift shop is expected too, but most locals are still adopting a wait-and-see approach.

Ninian Sanders, partner in the Northampton agents Bidwells, is more bullish. The area has long been undervalued, he says. "It's been a bit of a secret until now." He expects prices to rise nearby, mainly because of improved rail links to London which is now just an hour away. Local people are anxious that the expected tourist explosion

should be carefully controlled however. One possibility is restricting the volume of visitors to the village by creating authorised routes.

Local people fear that narrow country lanes around Althorp will not be able to deal with the traffic.

Northampton County Council is considering a parking ban and speed limits along the main road past Althorp. Daventry District Council is working with Althorp and parish councils to deal with the expected impact on the environment.

Simon Bowley, a council spokesman, says: "Althorp is not a tourist attraction but a family burial site, so we don't want to encourage people by offering accommodation. Of course, those who have admission to Althorp will be provided with facilities, but no provisions will be made for visitors without tickets."

Whether such plans succeed in keeping the area's character, and the memorial's dignity, is no more possible to predict than was the early death of Diana.

Additional research by Alex Wijeratne

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هكذا من الأهل



A night out with Edward Whitehouse, David Brunton and Simon Bligh and the house where Ffion lived in Oxford



Ffion's father, Emyr, is a former director of the Eisteddfod. Her mother, Myra, is a magistrate and a Welsh tutor



Larking about in her college days as a brunette



That dress: oversold as a see-through number costing £2,000



The Jenkins's family home is a modest house in the middle-class Cardiff suburb of Rhiwbina



Ffion and William greet the Thatchers at this year's Conservative Party conference in Blackpool

Continued from page 1

is cultural rather than political. Her pilgrimage to the heart of the British political establishment began in the middle-class Cardiff suburb of Rhiwbina. Her father Emyr is chief executive of the Arts Council of Wales and a former director of the National Eisteddfod. Her mother Myra is a magistrate and Welsh tutor.

Not that Ffion had it all her own way. Her elder sister, Manon, was also a high flyer and the two girls competed fiercely for the glittering prizes, with Ffion determined never to come second even if that meant missing out on playground fun and games. Both were musical, with Manon favouring the harp and Ffion the clarinet, which she played with the National Youth Orchestra of Wales.

As one classmate puts it: "Ffion wasn't very well liked in school. She kept things to herself and was rather aloof. She was academic and hard-working but she always seemed rather old-fashioned and eccentric. She never had a boyfriend and was known as a bit of a snob."

Manon went to Cambridge, collected a PhD and is now assistant private secretary to the Prince of Wales and when Ffion went to Oxford, her father was overheard to remark rather smugly: "There's

no chance of us losing the boat race in this house."

Ffion (three As and a B at A level) got a good degree in English and a master's by writing a thesis in Welsh on the poetry of the English writer Thomas Gray.

Manon, three years older and married to the Welsh baritone Jeremy Huw Williams, abandoned the tussle with Ffion only after learning of her sister's engagement.

A family friend says: "Manon rang her father to be told that Ffion was marrying William. Admitting defeat, she replied: 'Well, that's the end of sibling rivalry'."

By all accounts Ffion blossomed at Jesus College, where she became chairman of the Welsh Society and devised some bizarre swearing-in ceremonies, mostly involving swinging the society's ceremonial sword about her head. One rowdy evening, a fellow student hurled the sword in the air and Ffion had to be hauled off to the Radcliffe Infirmary for stitches to a leg wound.

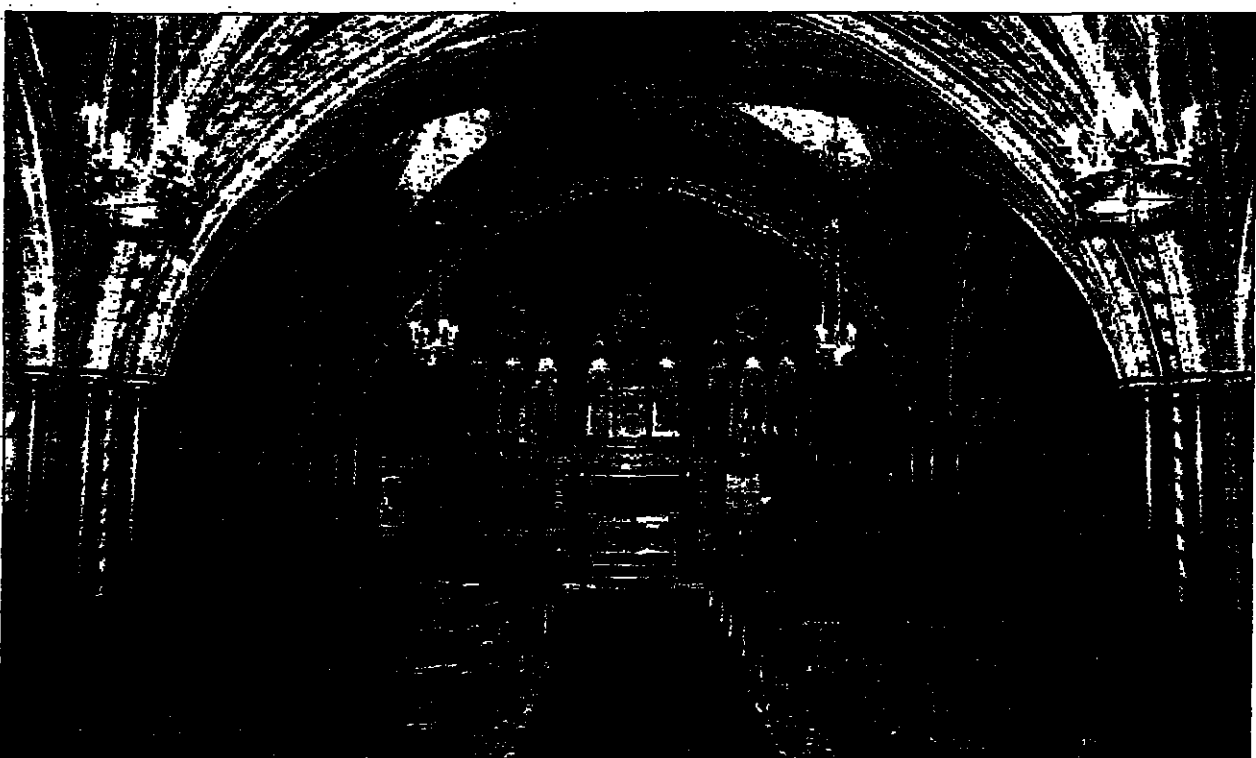
A university friend recalls: "She was still a swot in college but she made more of an effort to socialise. She had a boyfriend and tried to wear trendy clothes. She would come out partying but was still hard-

working and competitive."

Ffion's discretion is commented upon by virtually all her friends. One says, a touch cattily, that she would make the "ideal corporate wife", which, since she is marrying a former management consultant, may be no bad thing.

Another says that he was with her and a group of other people the night before she and William announced their engagement. "I didn't even know they were seeing each other," he admits. "And except for Manon, I don't think any of the others were in the know."

The wedding chapel was once used as a stable and a coal cellar



The Medieval Crypt at Westminster has been the venue for many society weddings and MPs' funerals

The Medieval Crypt in the Palace of Westminster, where William Hague and Ffion Jenkins will tie the knot, was built as a chapel but in the past it has been used as a stable, a coal cellar and as the Speaker's changing room. Katherine Bergen writes. A ruling in 1924 dictated that the chapel does not come under any specific ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Along with Westminster Hall which it

adjoins, it was one of the few areas of the Palace that survived a fire in 1834. It is now used frequently for weddings, baptisms and the funerals of MPs.

In 1993, Ann Widdecombe was received into the Catholic Church in the crypt, in one of the few non-Protestant masses held there since the Reformation. The Reverend Ian Paisley duly protested. Labour MP Diane Abbott's baby was christened there and it has been the

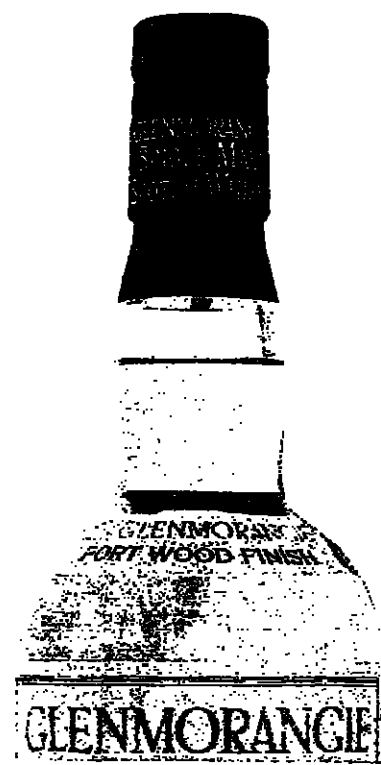
venue for many society weddings. On seeing the Tory MP Peter Fry leave the chapel after marrying his much younger second wife in 1984, the then Speaker of the Commons, George Thomas, remarked to a party of visiting dignitaries: "Isn't it splendid to see a father giving away his daughter?"

The service is expected to be traditional with the Speaker's Chaplain and a Welsh minister both officiating.



The engaged couple enjoy a drink at the Carlton Club

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GLENMORANGIE WOOD FINISHES For those who nose.

There is an alternative to socks

Christmas is, perhaps, the only time of year when a girl begins to wish that her chap had some kind of a hobby. Jane Shilling writes. Under normal circumstances, on meeting a man who shyly confesses to a passion for, say, collecting matchbooks, the sensible thing is to flee. But as Advent advances, and the question of what to buy for Daddy, Uncle Jasper, et al remains unsolved, one becomes pathetically grateful for any variation on the theme of socks and yet more socks (plus, for the new man in one's life, cashmere socks).

The best policy with men is to observe their behaviour. David Attenborough-style, throughout the year, and then buy them something you know they would have bought for themselves — spanners, strong drink, golf balls, notebooks for writing Deep Thoughts in — but presented in a leather case. It's an expensive way of buying a chap a spanner, but it shows you've Made an Effort.

PRESENTS FOR HIM

BACK ROW (from left): The Kangaroo Jump Boots are the fat-burners every high-flyer will need on Boxing Day to jump off Christmas excesses. £99.95, Harrods (0171-730 1294). Christmas star decoration, £1.50, Habitat (0245 324433). Baseball/football set, £34, which includes baseball gloves, bat, balls and cap, is a must for sporty kids and not-so-grown-ups, The General Trading Company (0171-730 0411). The Havana Club Cigar Humidor, £2,200, is made from sycamore with Spanish cedar interior trays, and holds up to 75 cigars. The Havana Club (0171-245 0880). On top is a sterling silver cigar cutter, £115, Liberty (0171-734 1234). If he is travelling, pack a baby Christmas tree small enough to fit into a briefcase, £5.50, Graham & Greene (0171-727 4594). Wrap him up in style in Gucci's velvet scarf, £265, in red and orange, Harvey Nichols (0171-235 5000). The Activity Superstore has the Götter's Ultimate Present: a round of golf with a professional, for beginners or advanced players, £99 to £239 (01793 626259). Sick of him being stuck in traffic? Give The Trafficmaster, £169, which provides the latest information on roadworks and traffic jams, Harrods, as above. The champagne case, £110, is the ultimate gift for the man who has everything: the leather case includes two glasses and space for his favourite bubbly, Oasen (0800 032685). Inside are Venus fridge magnets, £9.95, Lattal Ideas (01548 831070). Behind is a wooden walking stick, £85.50, with concealed flask and cups, The Scottish House (0171-581 2151). And on top is a silver mesh star, £11.95, and Christmas reindeer, £2.50, The General Trading Company (as above).

CENTRE ROW (from left): Get him organised with the Pelon Series 5 penholder, £499.99, Dixons (0990 500049). The 6MB handheld computer has a keyboard, dictaphone and data-transfer capability. If the wannabe 007 isn't knocked out by this James Bond-style watch from Omega, he will be if he finds out the price: £1,095. Watches of Switzerland (0171-734 2389). The five-language translator, £59.95 from Harrods (as above), allows the globetrotter to converse wherever he is at the flick of a switch. If he is the sort of man who wants to see images instantly, he will love the Panasonic DC1000 digital camera, which will allow him to view pictures on his PC, alter their colour and crop out unwanted memories, £299, Tesco (01442 215151). Help him to keep his studs and cufflinks together with this tan leather stud box, £55, Pink (0171-498 3882). Wrench his heart with the ultimate toilet, Corroby (0171-235 3883), which contains every tool a handyman will need in the finest leather case. Made to order, from £1,200.

FRONT ROW (from left): If he's religious about sitting in front of his computer, the Madonna mouse-pad is for him, £15.95, Aris (0171-225 1021). Give him a pretty lady with the Tequila Shooter Kit, £45, The Glutinous Gardeners (0171-627 0800), which includes fresh lime, glasses, salt and a bottle of the best tequila. A leather book, Oasen (as above), available in black or brown leather, £13.95 to £24.95, will keep his ideas in one place. If a bottle of wine in front of the telly is his idea of a good time, he will love Floyd's France — an interactive video with four quarter-bottles of wine, £12.99, Tesco (01892 822222). Vintage Wine (01483 715058). Coston & Tower Wines (0181-758 4500). Silver mistletoes, £3.95 for 12, Habitat (as above). The Magnifico Word Set, £14.95, initial losses (01548 831070) see him spell out what he is feeling on the fridge door. For the adventurer, the chrome Space Pen, £17.50, Aris (as above) will be invaluable as it writes under water, over grease or in blazing heat.

Photographs by Des Jensen, Research and styling by Jennifer Riggberg

Antique furniture going for a song

When opera diva Lesley Garrett started doing up her cottage in Lincolnshire, there was only one place to go. Michael Cable reports

my favourite shop

So are you going to give us a song then, luv? comes the cheery call from a fellow browser, catching sight of opera star Lesley Garrett across the old barn showroom cluttered with antique pine furniture.

"Well, I might," teases Britain's No 1 soprano, looking up with a smile from the autograph books she is signing enthusiastically for three local schoolgirls. Ms Garrett is making one of her regular visits to Epworth Pine & Country Furniture in Epworth, North Lincolnshire. Everybody up here seems to be on chatting terms with the hugely popular "people's diva". She was born and brought up just across the border in South Yorkshire and has a close-knit family of more than 50 relatives living in the area. Fiercely proud of her working-class roots, she has a weekend cottage just up the road. "I live in London these days but this is still home," she says. "I get back whenever I can."

It was after she bought the cottage ten years ago and started doing it up that she first discovered the workshop where Richard Ellory and Bryan Chaffer had set up in business together, selling not only genuine antique pine furniture but also beautifully crafted reproduction pieces made from reclaimed timber.

"It was my sister, Jill, who put me onto them," she recalls. "Old pine was exactly what I needed for the cottage. When I went along I just fell in love with Richard Ellory's workshop and the way he works. He takes wood that looks as if it is only fit for the bonfire and a fortnight later he has turned it into a fantastic piece of antique pine furniture."

Ms Garrett has furnished her cottage from top to bottom with their pieces. "The first thing I bought was

a Welsh dresser," she remembers. "The base was original and the top half was made so cleverly from reclaimed timber that you couldn't tell the difference. I was interested in its history."

"Then there was a rather unusual pine chaise longue which they let me have for £120 and which has since turned out to be rather valuable. Perhaps we'd better not mention that!" One of the farmhouse tables in which the shop specialises, several chairs, a corner washstand, a blanket chest and various picture frames followed. "Every time I finished a room I would come here to furnish it," Ms Garrett says.

She had bought the cottage and had thrown herself into the job of doing it up as a sort of "healing therapy" after the break-up of a relationship had left her feeling "fed up and unloved", she explains. "The cottage was in a very sad, dilapidated state and, a bit like me at the time, needed some care and attention. And I thought — I'm going to buy this little place and 'love it up', as we say in Yorkshire. I filled in every little crack myself and it was like a healing process for me, too."

It certainly seemed to do the trick because no sooner had she finished the restoration three years later than

she famously met her GP husband, Peter, on a blind date and was so smitten that she moved in with him only days later. At the same time, she landed a record deal and made the first of a string of best-selling albums. The latest, *A Soprano Inspired*, has gone straight to No 1 in the classical charts.

It was quite a while before Messrs Ellory and Chaffer realised who their regular customer was.

"We had no idea she was famous," Mr Ellory says. "She was just this lovely, bubbly, bags-of-character type of person."

"Then, after she'd been coming here regularly for a couple of years, I was watching the *Last Night of the Proms* on the television one night and, suddenly, there she was! I got such a shock. I literally fell off the settee."

Friendly, funny, feisty and refreshingly down-to-earth, the 42-year-old prima donna relishes the ordinary, one-of-us treatment she still gets on her home patch.

"I'm nobody special up here — just the local girl," she insists cheerfully in her Yorkshire accent, as blunt as ever.

Her glamorous image, her readiness to sing pop songs and show-tunes as well as the classics, and her enthusiasm for appearing on television programmes like *Noel's House Party* and *Birds of a Feather* have caused raised eyebrows among the snootier opera set. Her forthcoming television duet with Lily Savage (on December 21) will



Lesley Garrett with Richard Ellory and Bryan Chaffer at Epworth Pine & Country Furniture in Lincolnshire

undoubtedly have them once more reaching for the smelling salts.

"Good!" she grins mischievously. "There is an element that fears that the more popular something becomes, the cheaper and nastier it gets, but I would argue vehemently

against them. We need to break down the snobbery surrounding opera and classical music.

"You can make it popular without making it trivial. People just need to be exposed to it, as was proved by Pavarotti, Nussim Dornia and the

World Cup. We need to learn from pop singers in making opera more accessible, otherwise it will die."

Epworth Pine & Country Furniture, 25 Station Road, Epworth, Lines DN9 1UY (0147 875155). Open 10am-5pm, seven days a week.

GADGETS

THE EGG Decapper sits on a 2-bulb egg and you twist it "any angle" through 360 degrees to take off the shell, leaving the egg intact. But it helps to have "asbestos" fingers. Since you have to steady the egg to work the gadget.

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Egg Decapper

built-in magnet for storing on the toaster "or nearest appliance".

The Banana Split from Taylor & Ng is a 10in banana-shaped plastic stencil, in yellow, with a series of thin cross-way slats. One push and the peeled fruit is neatly sliced into perfect mouthfuls for banana sandwiches or banana pies.

TIM WAPSHOTT

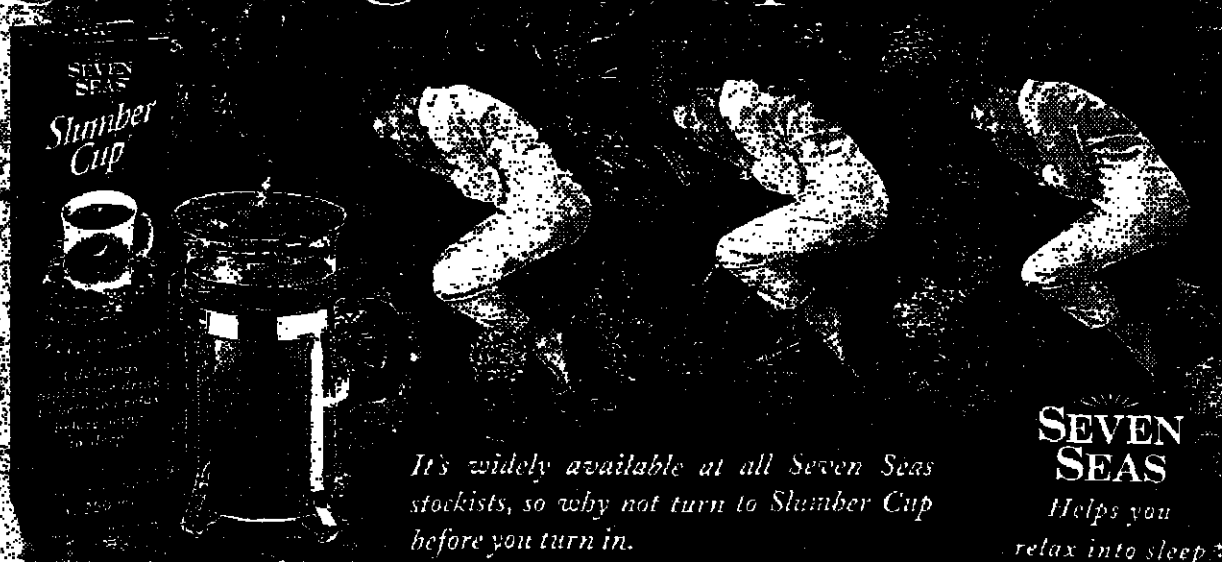
• Egg Decapper, £3.50 plus p.p., from Presents for Men (01295 750100); Toast Tongs, £6 plus p.p., from Purves & Furnes (0870 603 0203); Banana Split, £1.75, from Taylor & Ng (0181 042 9361).

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Mere slips of things

Talk about British knitwear, and the first thing that comes to mind is bulky, chunky, Aran styles—sloppy joes and jumpers worn by country aunts because they are warm, comfortable and conservative.

This year, however, the knitted and crocheted wear so beloved of the Women's Institute has been revitalised by top

designers, who have shown a range of modern knitwear alongside more traditional materials on the catwalks.

Catrina Campbell of the International Wool Secretariat says designers have taken to the material because it is versatile and can be used "to cover the female form in an exciting and contemporary way". The latest looks are far from the British stereotypes: wispy and fairy-like, they are strung together with cobweb strands that hug the body in feminine wafts. Many are woven in the finest denier, which drapes beautifully across the body or can be seductively wrapped to enhance womanly curves.

"Crocheted items are especially feminine, as they can be made of any denier, so they can be made to look delicate for evening or dressed down for day," says Laine Keogh, the Irish knitwear specialist. "Women like to feel like women. And our range makes them feel that way, as well as making them appear modern and lithe."

If proof were needed that women like Keogh's range, there was plenty at her show. Naomi Campbell and Helena Christensen both agreed to waive their modelling fee in return for one of her dresses. As well as "beautiful, warm, jewel-coloured" sweaters, Keogh showed a ravishing

sheer black fishnet knitted dress worn by Jodie Kidd, fine denier mohair tops in amethyst, tomato and amber, and a long, fine-knit coat trimmed with ostrich modelled by Helena Christensen.

Keogh's creations have also become coveted items in Hollywood, and her lace evening dresses are worn by Demi Moore, Liz Taylor and Isabella Rossellini.

John Rocha's creations have also been in demand this year, particularly the hand-knitted and hand-crocheted dresses which he hand-dyes to keep the silky textures.

"I have always used fine knits in my collections," he says, "as I love the idea of a

gossamer layer skimming the body. For spring/summer 1998, I have featured delicate knits and fine crochets throughout the collection in different textures, from fringing and ribbon yarn to fragile textures. The brave can wear them on their own, but most women will wear them over a dress or camisole."

Although skimpy dresses are ideal for summer, they can be adapted for winter, combined with soft woollen coats, light cashmere throws and even straight-leg pants. And, because of their transparency, the fine wool combinations are perfect to wear in layers with silk underslips in warm tones or with delicately pat-

terned tights for a warm and opulent look.

They can be given a bohemian look by teaming them with thick, fur-trimmed cardigans and square-toed boots or an elegant twist by wearing them with fine jewellery and high heels, or they can be combined with classic separates for everyday wear.

And, because most of the items are made of natural fibres, the dresses are not only comfortable, but they also allow the body to breathe. Which means that, even in the hottest parties over the Christmas season, women in fine knits will merely glow.

LISA GRAINGER

RIGHT: Black sheer mohair marabou-trim halterneck dress, £200, Plain Sud, House of Fraser, selected branches nationwide (0171-963 2000). Black velvet boots, £135, Russell & Bromley, 24-25 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 6903)

ABOVE: Blue, white and black zig-zag silky knit dress, £29.99, Jeffrey Rogers, The Plaza, Oxford Street, W1, and branches nationwide (01923 474400)

LEFT: Brown and white delicate sheer top, £98, John Richmond, Harrods, SW1; Selfridges, W1 (0171-978 5278). Chocolate fine-knit A-line skirt, £239, T.S.E., Harvey Nichols, as before. Beige square-toe shoes, £49.99, Ravel, branches nationwide (0171-436 3126)

FAR LEFT: Khaki wool crepe fine-knit vest, £199, T.S.E., Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-263 4433). Plum suede jeans, £259, Joseph, 26 Sloane Street, SW1 (0171-590 6200)

LEFT: Burgundy lace knit dress, £49.99, River Island, branches nationwide (0181-998 8822)

THREE OF A KIND

FINELY patterned tights are a natural accompaniment to sheer knits for that head-to-toe lacy look. Here are three of the best. L.G.

Chocolate flowery tights, £9.99, Jonathan Aston, large department stores nationwide (0116-286 2388)

Black delicate lace tights, £59, Fogal, 36 New Bond Street, W1, and Harrods, SW1 (0171-493 0900)

Dark navy fan-patterned tights, £7, Aristoc, department stores nationwide (01773 525520)

Photographs by Richard Burns. Hair and make-up by Sally Kvalheim for Jo Hanford (0171-963 2236). Styling by Amanda Uppel

'My grandfather would have been so proud to see his grandson waving a flag at royalty at a grand ceremonial occasion'

Some day my prince will come

It is a strange and remarkable process, the one whereby having children turns you, despite all your resolutions to the contrary, into your own parents. As a small girl I remember being both baffled and enraged by my mother and father's mysterious interest in that triple-distilled essence of boredom, the weather forecast. The weather, I felt, would do whatever it was destined to do, regardless of whether my parents were on its case or not. And anyway, why couldn't they just look out of the window? Yet now, every morning at five to seven, and again at five to eight, I find myself, quite inexplicably, given that I work all day in a windowless office, shielded alike from the heat of the sun and the winter's rage, going, "shhh! Alexander, do shut up!" as Michael Fish drones his strangely compelling recital of southerlies veering north-westerly and pockets of frost in exposed areas.

Last week was a particularly anxious time on the weather front. Even Alexander took to falling silent at the vital moment. We were keen to know what was in store for the Queen's Golden Wedding lunch. Not that we usually take such a close interest in Her Majesty's

welfare, but while she was attending the People's Banquet, the Prince of Wales was to escort a coach party of his European relatives down to Greenwich for a hot lunch, and Commander Maughan, of the Royal Naval College, had had the inspired idea of inviting children from the local schools to form a welcoming party — but only if the weather was fine.

LIFE AND SOUL



JANE SHILLING

state of preservation of their little acrylic sweatshirts. "Oh dear," I said to Alexander. "I think it's all off, really. You won't be seeing the kings sit down to dinner and the queens stand up to dance after all. What a shame." I was amazingly disappointed — far more put out than Alexander, who had gone to all the trouble of making the flags and banners. I think it was the idea of how proud my grandfather, sentimental as only an old sailor can be, would have been to see his great-grandson among the children at what, presumably, will be one of the last ceremonial occasions to take place at the Royal Naval College before its trans-

formation into luxury offices, or a hostel for the homeless, or whatever fate awaits it. I sat at work all day, listening to the rain beating on the roof, and minding terribly about all those flags unwaved and banners unhoisted. "So," I said to Alexander when I got home. "What did you do today?" "Well," said the child, with the dégage air of one who spends so much time hobnobbing with the Hohenlohes that it has become a bit of a bore, really. "It dried up at lunchtime, so we went and waved our flags after all."

"Oh," I said, thrilled. "And did you see Prince Charles?" "Yeah," said Alexander. "And Jamie got kissed by the Queen of Spain." A pause. "Girlie?" "Coo. Well, there's regal for you. I opened my mouth to ask more. What was she wearing? Did she have her crown on? Why didn't she kiss you? Were you by any chance sniffing in that revolting fashion? But Alexander had clearly had enough of the subject, and headed me off like an equerry deflecting an impertunate subject. "Now, mum," he said. "Miss Cartwright says it's nearly Advent. So, what do you want for Christmas?"

This is a very good question. The standing list of what I want (star sapphire, three-gallon vat of Apres l'Orde) still stands, of course, but what I actually need is something to help me get to grips with this house. What with the hot water flood, and the huge, stinky green fungus that has sprouted just by the back door, and the cold water flood (this last prompted an interesting revelation to type in Alexander, who drifted



Marriage counsellor Madeleine Kingsley meets John Gottman, whose mix of science and therapy offers hope to troubled couples

WHY MARRIAGES SUCCEED OR FAIL AND HOW YOU CAN MAKE YOURS LAST



JOHN GOTTMAN

Left: Professor John Gottman and, above, his book



Hard times: Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, the embittered couple in *Whose Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Get the hell out of a heavenly match

An American in London this week has unusual designs on your marriage. John Gottman, Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington, is here to tell us how any couple — even one at divorce's door — can improve their relationship through a repair and maintenance programme developed in his own Seattle "Love Lab". Finding that seven years after marriage, 75 per cent feel less happy than they originally did, Professor Gottman set about studying what researchers had sorely neglected: a scientific study of what made up the 25 per cent.

His controversial approach involves couples having ECG electrodes attached to chests, sweat detectors, pulse monitors and a video camera closing in on every expression and gesture.

Contrary to myth, he found it was not financial ease or compatibility that made the difference, but the way happy couples steered their way through disagreements without drowning in the destructive rapids of criticism, contempt, defensiveness and silent sulks.

Arguing, he says, "can be one of the healthiest things a couple can do", provided they make up easily and are as free with affection as anger.

If the amount of time spent touching, smiling, laughing and paying compliments outweighs by a ratio of five to one the time spent at odds, then you have got what Professor Gottman calls "the magic". "I think a good marriage is like a jazz quartet," he says. "It's about the music a couple makes together... and the way they improvise."

In the past 20 years, Professor Gottman (55, twice married, with a seven-year-old daughter), has analysed not just the feelings but the physiology of hundreds of husbands and wives: the way their pulse rate, respiration and blood pressure react in everyday conversation and strife.

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CHANGING TIMES

The Woody Allen theory

One couple's verdict on Gottman: 'He helped us laugh at ourselves'

Shelley and Jonathan Bloom, booked in for John Gottman's first Seattle workshop in 1996, Jonathan, 47, is a health administrator and Shelley, 42, works in community education. They have been married for 12 years and have two children.

"Our marriage wasn't terrible at that particular time, because we'd settled down and come to accept things in each other," says Shelley. "But there were still some resentments. We'd had our roughest time in the first three years of marriage."

Jonathan had unresolved problems from his first marriage, and I couldn't understand why everything wasn't blissful when I found the love of my life."

Shelley and Jonathan were surprised by the diversity of couples they met at Gottman's workshop. "Some were engaged, and some were actually divorced but hoping to get back together. But although there were so many of us, the whole weekend was structured around

privacy and there was plenty of room, physically, to find it. "There was no uncomfortable group disclosure. John and his wife Julie would explain an exercise and we'd then go off and do it in pairs."

"It was great to realise from his statistics that we were not the only ones having problems — that it was quite normal, in fact, to be expected — that you'd feel lonely at times in a marriage and divided by completely different private thoughts about an issue."

(Gottman, for instance, uses a scene from the Woody Allen movie, *Annie Hall*, to highlight a classic disagreement about sex. When Annie's therapist asks her how often she and Alvie sleep together, she says, "Constantly. Three times a week. Alvie's view is, "Never. Three times a week.")

Gottman, say the Blooms, "helps us to laugh at our-

heard, show interest and ask more questions.

"I may not sound major, but for me, one sore issue was the use of TV. I hate TV, and I didn't like Jonathan having it on every evening so that it killed conversation and the kids relied on it. If I went to turn it off or impatiently pushed the mute button, it caused a lot of tension. I'd never liked to push it too far because it seemed such a flashpoint."

"But it felt safe in the workshop. I was able to let go of some resentment and just having Jonathan listen was in itself a help. He said he understood and would try very hard."

The Blooms say that they felt "reconnected and therefore physically more affectionate" after their weekend. "We weren't all of a sudden rocking round town kissing," they say. "But in a less dramatic way, we felt there was more trust and that emotionally, we'd found a deeper level. It hasn't worn off; in fact, we continue to see very slight, subtle changes."

John Gottman speaks at the One to One conference on Wednesday, December 3 (071-831 5261). His book, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* (£9.99), is published by Bloomsbury this week.

Josa Young
reports on how
today's foundlings
have coped with
being abandoned
at birth

Most of us date our lives from the day we were born. But for a tiny minority, life begins when they are found in a bus shelter or a telephone box. These children are known as foundlings, a label attached to abandoned babies that has not changed since Henry Fielding wrote his novel *The History of Tom Jones — a Foundling*, in the mid-18th century.

Tomorrow the concluding episode to the BBC dramatisation of the novel will be shown and although I am not going to spoil the ending for you, suffice it to say that unlike most foundlings, Tom does find out who his mother is.

For Sandra Webster, there has been no happy ending. She was found on a dark, chilly evening by the editor of a now-defunct newspaper behind his office in King's Cross. It was 6.30pm on November 8, 1955. She was about three weeks old. Years later, the editor's daughter wrote to tell her she was healthy when found and to tell her the exact circumstances of her discovery — but Sandra will not divulge this. She says: "I can't say what I was wrapped in. I need to keep something back, just in case someone comes forward."

Originally called Elizabeth Gray — after the Queen and the nearest road to which she was found, as is the custom — her name was changed to Sandra when she was adopted. She grew up, became a nurse and married. All went well until the birth of a daughter sparked off post-natal depression. Her condition was provoked, she believes, by unresolved feelings about being abandoned.

Since then she has counselled more than 60 fellow foundlings through the National Organisation for Counselling of Adoptees and Parents (Norcap), which runs a founding sub-group. "You think you are the only one," she says. "It helps to know there are others."

In England and Wales since 1977, babies in this category have been registered separately on the Abandoned Children's Register after six months to a year of police inquiries.

The numbers vary wildly: in the first year there were five. They hovered in single figures until 1983, when they shot up to 16. They rose during the recession of the late 1980s, with a record 18 in 1989. There are slightly more girls found than boys, although whether this is because girls are tougher at birth and more likely to survive exposure is not known.

Little Catherine Nightingale is set to be the first to be registered this year. At 5.40am on May 15, an Edmonton newsagent opened his door to bring in the papers. On the step was a holdall containing a very small newborn baby girl wrapped in a tea towel and T-shirt. The newspaper delivery men said she had not been there an hour earlier, when they dropped the papers. Some desperate girl chose her moment — she knew that newsagents open early. "We all think she was left to be found," says her case worker Mary Cook.

Sandra confirms that few babies



This baby girl was left outside a newsagent's last May. Her mother has not been traced; she will be adopted

'She will never know where her baby is now'

are found in "negative circumstances" — in other words, they are rarely left to die. Catherine's mother must have been very young because the baby weighed only 4lb in spite of being healthy and full-term. The police handed the baby over to the out-of-hours social worker, who named her Catherine after her first foster mother and Nightingale after a nearby street.

The police carried out an exhaustive investigation but nobody came forward, so she will be adopted.

In North London last year there was a less typical case. A young woman admitted herself to the labour ward of North Middlesex hospital and gave birth. She spoke

no English and while staff were trying to find an interpreter, she vanished, leaving her baby girl behind.

It is difficult to understand in this liberal age, where illegitimacy and single parenthood carry no stigma, why any woman would abandon her baby. "At least I can comfort myself that the social climate at the time made single parenthood impossible," says Sandra Webster.

Today most adoptees can trace their birth parents, although some choose not to. Andy McNab, author of the SAS bestseller *Bravo Two Zero*, has no desire to trace the woman who abandoned him in November 1959 in a Harrods carrier bag on the

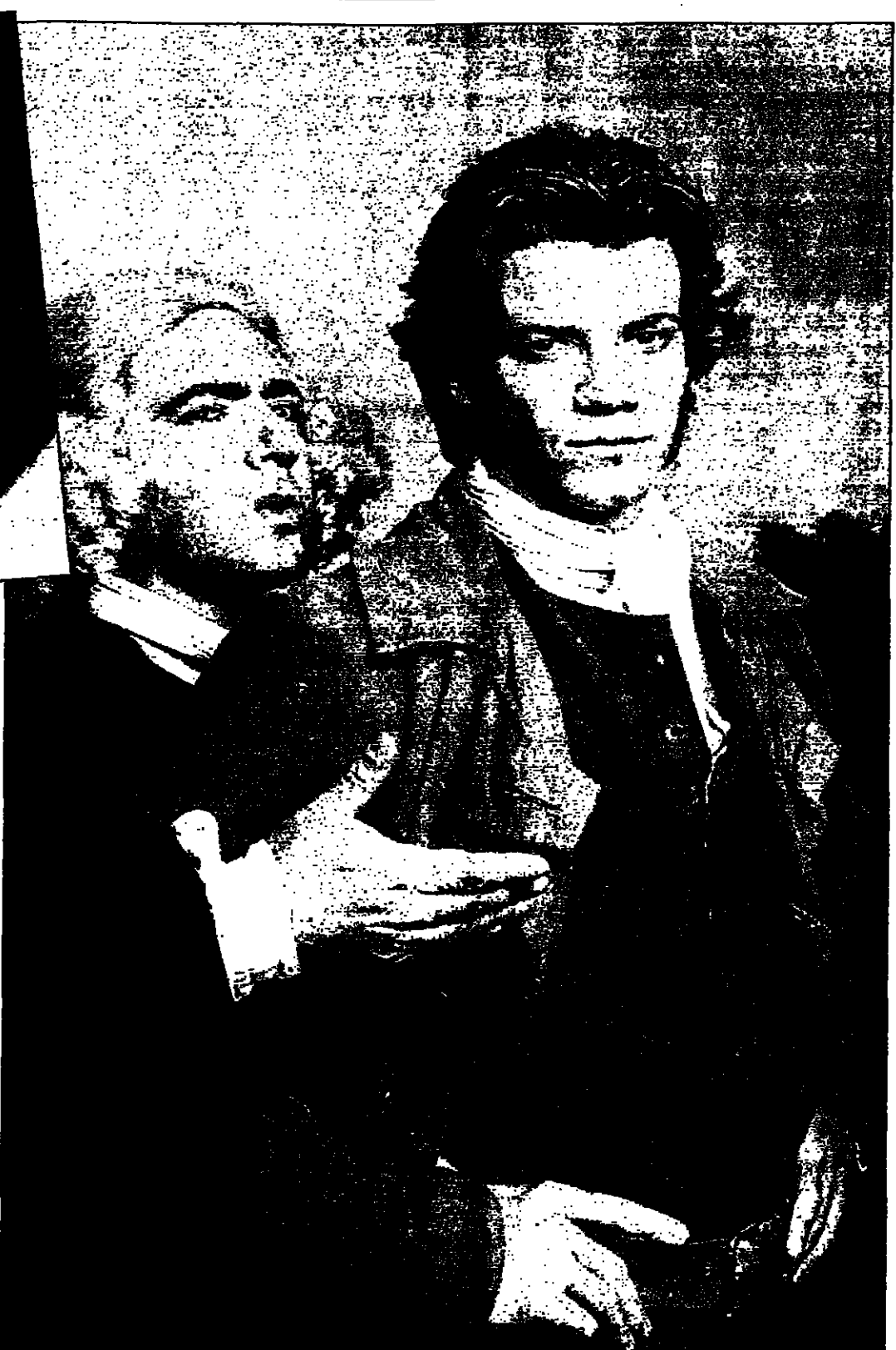
steps of Guy's Hospital in London.

"The couple who adopted me did a great job and I never felt the impulse to look for anyone else. As far as I'm concerned, they are my parents."

Reunions between adoptees and their famous parents, however, do pop up regularly in the papers. Clare Short and Joni Mitchell recently fulfilled two adoptees' fantasies about having celebrity parents. "I feel I am a jigsaw," said one adoptee trying to find his parents. "All my pieces are there, but the ones at the bottom are blank."

But for the foundling there is no trace — the blank cannot be filled. The National Contact Register will not list them because their cases are considered closed.

"You know nothing about yourself or your family," says Sandra. "For instance, my husband is average height but my elder son is



Henry Fielding's famous foundling from *The History of Tom Jones*, played by Max Beesley on BBC1

already over six feet tall with size 13 feet. Where does that come from?"

Dr Malcolm Smith, a Durham University anthropologist, has studied child abandonment throughout history. He concluded

that it was a haphazard business in Britain, but became a form of family planning elsewhere — a system that originated in 14th-century Italy. Dr Smith says: "Every town in southern Europe

had its foundling hospital. The hospital had a revolving cradle — rather like the night safe in a bank — into which you popped your unwanted baby before pushing it into the wall, knowing that rudimentary care lay within — although mortality rates were high, in some places 100 per cent.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the 18th-century philosopher, abandoned his five illegitimate children in this way. If you made a premarital mistake in those days in a Catholic county, it might render you unfit to wed. Without the baby, you would be a better prospect."

Sandra says: "A lot of our sorrow isn't for us. It is for the women desperate enough to leave us. They have had to live their whole lives with the guilt, and they will never know what happened to their child."

● Norcap (National Organisation for Counselling of Adoptees and Parents), 112 Church Road, Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX3 1LL.

CELEBRITIES WHO MADE IT ON THEIR OWN



Moses was left in a basket among the bullrushes



SAS author Andy McNab: left on the steps of Guy's Hospital



Novelist Harold Robbins: abandoned at eight days



Edith Piaf: abandoned by her mother when she was two



Designer Bruce Oldfield: placed in a Barnardo's home

Grand National for gadgeteers

Inventors may be zany, but some are also wealthy, says James Rampton

The nightmare-prevention mattress, the inflatable chamber pot, the faecal-collecting walking stick. They all sound like spoof ads from *Private Eye*. But the biggest laugh is that they are genuine. Not only that, some-

one has gone to the trouble of registering them with the Patent Office in London.

All these hare-brained schemes are featured in *Great British Inventions*, edited by Mark Tanner. "When it comes to ingenuity, Britain still rules the waves," he says.

Figures from the Japanese trade ministry show that since the Second World War more than 50 per cent of worldwide patents have emanated from the UK, against 25 per cent from the United States and 5 per cent from Japan.

Who else but a Brit would have dreamt up a cereal bowl that stops your cornflakes becoming too soggy, or the combination backpack, camp bed and frame tent? Indeed, 200 British inventors are gathering this weekend at the Barbican for the London International Inventors Fair, with inventions ranging from hand-free hairdryers to folding wheelbarrows.

David Wardell, the editor of *Inventors World* magazine, reckons that this British peculiarity is because "we're imaginative. It's something about being an island race. We don't just sit around, we get on with things. There's also a romance attached to it."

Iain Andrew, a part-time actor in the Scottish television soap *High Road* and a full-time inventor, has devised such innovations as the extendable bath. "I lived in a flat in Glasgow which had only a bath in there, but it would need to slide back. So I made a model of one and approached the Patent Office. Necessity was the mother of invention."

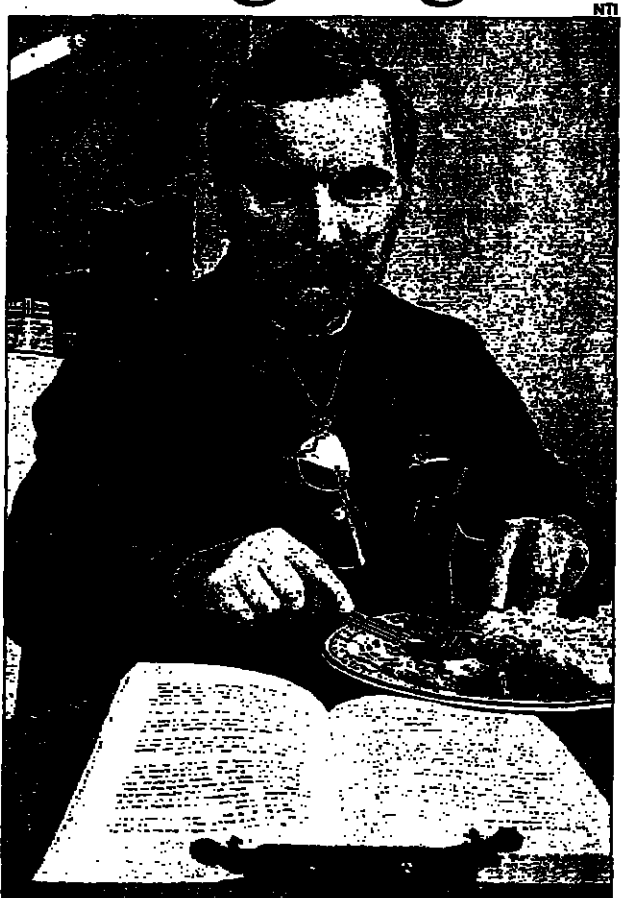
He went on to dream up the slightly less practical concept of a portable mirror-ball. "I went to a U2 concert, where they had a 40ft-wide mirror ball, and I thought, 'I'd like one of those'. So I went home, got out my soldering-iron and linked 150 CDs together with paper clips. My mirror ball is 6ft in diameter and it collapses for storage into a shoe box. I'm thinking of patenting it."

Mr Andrew is typical of the Great British Inventor: dogged, imaginative and just the right side of barking. He puts our affinity for innovations down to another constant of British life: the poor climate.

"Historically, we have a hell of a high invention ratio," he says. "and it's probably to do with our inclement weather. If you're indoors for 18 hours a day in, say, Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, then you've got a lot of time to think of ways to get out. We're all mad."

A quick glance at the history of inventing bears that out. "My favourite is a patent from the 1960s for a birthing table," Mr Wardell says. "The unfortunate mother in labour is strapped to the table, and the doctor pulls a lever to make it revolve. The idea is that the centrifugal force helps deliver the baby. There is even a net provided to catch the child."

Mr Wardell also comes up with "a hat with a gun attached, invented in Britain by a Mr Pratt at the turn of the century. When the prototype was tested, the unfortunate guinea pig had his neck broken by the recoil and died. But the inventor still went ahead and patented it. It's that



Still scheming: Spectangle inventor Douglas Buchanan

indomitable British spirit." Mr Wardell defends the reputation of inventors. Their image has suffered because "it's easier to have a laugh at something. But there are hundreds of amateur inventors out there and they're not all nutters."

"The main quality they need is tenacity. For example, Christopher Cockerell went around with a coffee-can soldered on to the end of a hairdryer to demonstrate his idea for the hovercraft. He was laughed at, but the rest is history."

Inventing can also be seen as the creative equivalent of winning the lottery. Douglas Buchanan is hoping for that kind of success with the inventions coming out of his Shropshire workshop. He is responsible for such devices as the Spectangle (a contraption for hanging glasses around your neck) and the Bookninja which, when you are dining alone, "fights the paperback you want to read, tames it and holds it flat, allowing you to use your knife and fork."

HOW TO BE AN INVENTOR

- Don't tell anyone about your brilliant idea — not even your family.
- Prove that no one else has had the same idea.
- Register your invention with an explanatory drawing at the Patent Office. This will cost £25. At this stage you might consider employing a patent agent who will draft you a watertight application. But that could set you back by as much as £2,000.
- A year later, for another £130, the Patent Office publishes your idea.
- Once the Office is satisfied it is original, for a further £130 you are issued with a full patent.
- This will still only apply in the UK. You need to register with overseas Patent Offices individually. Cost is about £2,000 per country. A worldwide patent costs about £140,000.

Mr Buchanan admits that the most unlikely concepts can succeed. "Someone came to me with a little revolving electric motor on a lolly stick so the child doesn't have to lick the lolly. I'd automatically say 'next'. But the guy who invented it is now a millionaire living in Hawaii. He sells them for \$1 each, and they cost 10 cents to produce."

Perhaps we should all buy shares in the nightmare-prevention mattress.

● *Great British Inventions*, edited by Mark Tanner (Fourth Estate, £5.99).

● The London International Inventors Fair continues this weekend at the Barbican. Present this copy of *The Times* at the door and pay only £4 for a £12 ticket.

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Knebworth House, national treasure and superior rock festival site

Some of England's finest stately homes could be saved with fresh Government funding. Rachel Kelly reports

Owners of some of England's finest historic houses, parks and gardens have a spring in their step even with the approach of midwinter. This month, they heard Chris Smith, the Heritage Secretary, sing their praises — in return, they gave him a standing ovation. Private owners were the best guardians of historic stately homes. Mr Smith said at the AGM of the Historic Houses Association. "So we must make it possible for two-thirds of the nation's built heritage to remain in secure private ownership."

For once, this is not mere rhetoric. Thanks to the National Lottery, the Government has a bit of extra cash for hard-pressed aristocrats. Through English Heritage, it is to provide about £3 million to give owners of more modest historic properties "rapid assistance."

As Mr Smith said: "I welcome the 'stitch-in-time' principle, under which early work to secure the weatherproofing of a building can save more extensive repairs later."

Labour has been surprisingly supportive of stately homeowners in Government. As Giles Worsley, deputy director of the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture, points out: "Despite occasional threats of punitive taxation, the country house has done remarkably well under Labour."

English Heritage has the extra

funds because it will no longer be funding the conservation area partnership schemes, which helped historic areas in financial need. In future, this is to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Stately homeowners themselves will be eligible for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund under the National Heritage Act 1997, expected to be in force by the end of the year. A flood of applications is expected, but historic homeowners must first prove that there is a clear public as well as heritage benefit from any repairs.

The Historic Houses Association (HHA) estimates that it needs £130 million of Government funding for major repairs to the fabric of its buildings. The association represents 1,400 historic homeowners, including Lord Cobbold, who owns Knebworth near Stevenage in Hertfordshire, and Lord Bath, who owns Longleat in Wiltshire.

A new HHA survey shows that 45 million people visit its properties each year — 250,000, for instance, crammed themselves into Knebworth over two days in the summer of 1996 to see Oasis perform. And nearly half a million visited the Safari Park at Knowsley Hall in Merseyside last year.

Richard Wilkin, HHA director-general, says: "The houses are central to Britain's biggest industry — tourism. Forty-six per cent of



Philip Howard, with wife Elizabeth and children William and Sandra, needs help with the upkeep of Naworth Castle in Cumbria

foreigners who visit come to see our heritage. The Government should recognise our contribution to tourism by helping with costs for re-roofing and stonework, for example, which are impossible for most homeowners to meet on their own."

In its latest survey, the HHA estimates that there are 500 houses which are eligible for Government funding because they are open to the public. Each house needs an average of £150,000 spent on repairs.

Mr Wilkin says: "However well-endowed these estates are, very few owners can afford these repairs."

Philip Howard and his wife Elizabeth are among those who could benefit from the Government's new largesse. They live in Naworth Castle, near Carlisle in Cumbria, a romantic border fortress dating back to 1335.

Mr Howard runs a corporate entertaining business at the house and caters for about 35 weddings each year. Naworth was also used as Mr Rochester's home, Thornfield, in LWT's adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, broadcast this year. But Mr Howard still faces an annual maintenance bill of £150,000 to keep the 14th-century house going.

The income from his various successful business enterprises means that Mr Howard will roughly break-even this year on the cost of running the house. But the house, which attracts about 15,000 visitors each year, still needs about £1 million worth of outstanding repairs.

"The roofs have had it," he says. "One entire wing is full of dry rot, and we need to upgrade our wiring."

If this work was done to the standard approved by English Heritage, the cost would be around £1 million.

Since taking over the property in 1994, Mr Howard has yet to receive a grant to help to pay for repairs. "Of course we could just sell up," Mr Howard says. But he points out that if he did, the contents of the house would be separated from their historic home. The 100ft great hall has a Gobelin tapestry, and there are other family possessions.

As Mr Wilkin, from the HHA, says: "What is special about these houses is that they have been in the same family for generations, and they have that family's possessions."

Stately homeowners are currently eligible for £5 million a year of grants from English Heritage, and its Scottish and Welsh equivalents.

They received £38,000 this year through the Heritage Lottery Fund, but only 20 houses are currently eligible for lottery money because they are charitable trusts.

Such historic houses are also eligible for small local authority grants and funds from the European Union's Raphael programme. They also enjoy tax breaks, chiefly conditional exemption deferring the payment of inheritance tax if they are open to the public.

It is too early to say how much fresh funds will flow to our country's finest houses — or when that money might become available. A spokesman from English Heritage says that spending for next year has yet to be agreed.

The Heritage Lottery Fund's contribution is also unknown — but at least the signs are promising.

SMART MOVES

■ VISCOUNT Linley is selling Ebury Lodge, in Belgrave, London SW1 for £3.65 million through Savills. The lodge was designed by David Rosemont for the Viscount, but he and his wife Serena never lived there, instead preferring a loft apartment in Battersea.



David Bowie

■ THEY ARE playing musical houses on the Caribbean island of Mustique, famed as the former home of Princess Margaret. David Bowie has sold his modern, Japanese-style house to Felix Denis from Denis Publishing, publisher of *Kung-fu* and computer magazines.



Caroline Charles

■ DRESS designer Caroline Charles is selling her Farncombe, Hampshire, cottage for £275,000 through Knight Frank.

■ THE former London home of Christina Onassis is for sale at £925,000 through Foxtons. The Mayfair flat was her private London home until her death in 1988.

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The open-plan living area is set out on different levels

The house of Bond's villain



Erno Goldfinger, left, whose ideas enraged Ian Fleming



Not many houses in leafy Sunningdale, Surrey, can claim to have been designed by a Goliath of crime, but Teesdale wins the accolade. Its architect, the modernist Erno Goldfinger, so enraged Ian Fleming that he named one of his best-known villains after him — "Mr Bond... if Mr Goldfinger wished to crush you, he would only have to turn over in his sleep."

The cause of their quarrel lay in Goldfinger's plans to rip down a row of Victorian houses overlooking Hampstead Heath and build flat-roofed council houses. This was the late 1930s. Later, Goldfinger became notorious as his tower blocks and Elephant and Castle offices came to symbolise all that was despised about Sixties brutalism.

Now Goldfinger is back in vogue, and his house in Willow Road has been acquired by the National Trust as a prime example of early Modernism. Teesdale, built in 1967, is set back from a tree-lined road south of Ascot, where houses stand in spacious grounds secluded by shrubs or metal gates that bar even a passing glimpse. What was once stockbroker Tudor is now sheikh alley.

Teesdale has one of the best positions of all, a hilltop site approached by a helter-skelter drive, winding steeply up through woodland. It looks as natural as can be, but Goldfinger worked hard on the drive and the hilltop

Marcus Binney ventures into the modern world of Erno Goldfinger's Teesdale

platform to achieve a perfect position for the house. His client, Jack Perry, was hailed as a pioneer of Anglo-Chinese trade in a handsome obituary in *The Times* on January 2 this year. Like many people from the East End of London, Perry went into the rag trade, but his life took a new direction when he struck up links with the Chinese at a Moscow conference in 1952.

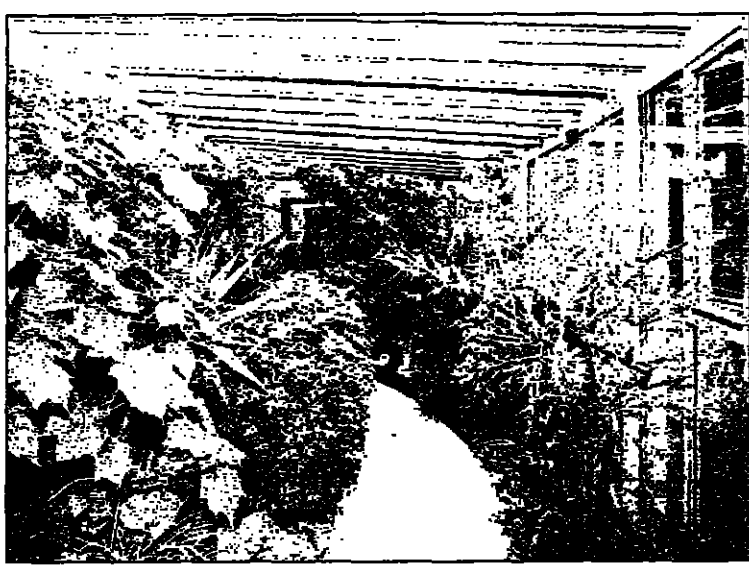
Over the next 40 years, he made more than 70 visits to China, and eventually became a visiting professor in Beijing, spending long periods lecturing Chinese students. With a determined client and architect, the house had a difficult gestation and went through several designs. But Goldfinger was proud of it in the end and his widow thought it was his best house.

Like early Miles van der Rohe houses, the composition is long, rectangular and low, with scarcely a window on the entrance side. The difference is that the composition is gently askew, like a railway train going round a bend.

There is an American-style carport and stylishly zigzag-



Teesdale, in Sunningdale, Surrey, was designed by Erno Goldfinger and is considered a prime example of modernist architecture. The house is on the market for £1.3 million



The lushly-planted conservatory leads to the bedrooms. The cedar-lined walls give the house a Japanese feel



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

ging steps which lead up to the glass front door. The house appears to be made entirely from wood but it has a brick frame. It uses the post-and-beam construction beloved of modernists for its simplicity.

A row of cruciform wooden columns along the garden front support "glu-lam" beams (glued and laminated) which rest on a solid wall at the other end. The outside is faced with cedar and the inside with cedar veneer. The roof is made of 2in timbers, tongued and grooved and covered with proprietary roofing.

The architect James Dunnett, who worked with Goldfinger, says: "His houses are built to a system of proportions. Every measurement was a multiple of 11 inches, here giving an 8ft 3in distance between columns."

The main part of the house is open-plan, with just a few steps up to the dining area. "All his houses have these slight changes of level. It was a feature he took from the Viennese architect Adolf Loos," Mr Dunnett says.

Modernists like their clients to enjoy perfect communion with nature. Goldfinger achieves this with huge floor-to-ceiling windows which slide back into the walls, turning living and dining areas into a virtual open-air terrace. Goldfinger chose his fittings well. The huge aluminium picture windows glide with ease after an initial pull, and the tilt-out top windows, operated by a chain mechanism, work as easily as car windows.

Even a screen which Rose Marlin, the present owner, said she had not moved since introducing a grand piano, glided effortlessly when I pulled it free of a concealed magnetic strip.

Goldfinger oriented the house exactly to the west to provide stunning hilltop views of the sunset — you look out, Cézanne-style, through the tops of trees, with magnificent

pinet and copper beeches providing glorious autumn colour. Underfloor heating and convectors keep the house pleasantly warm. "The bills are about £300 a quarter and £700 in midwinter," Mrs Marlin says.

The four bedrooms are in a separate block, approached through a lushly planted conservatory. "Most conservatories are tucked away in extensions, but here you're walking through it all the time," Mrs Marlin says. The bedrooms open off a top-lit corridor lined with cupboards, wooden of course, which give a distinctly Japanese feel.

"Goldfinger told me how he had watched the Japanese pavilion going up at the 1925 Art Deco Exhibition, each piece of wood being carefully unwrapped from crinkly paper," Mr Dunnett says.

The first bathroom serves two bedrooms, but has two basins, so a child need not feel dislodged if guests come to stay. The lavatory is in its own top-lit cubicle of sentry-box proportions. "Just like the lavatory on a private jet," says Mrs Marlin who is never

short of a good selling line. The master bedroom is the one place where the previous owners rebelled against the all-pervasive wood in favour of painted walls. In moving partitions they also exposed a column containing Goldfinger's internal rainwater pipes — he didn't want gutters interrupting the clean lines of his exterior.

The criticism can be made that this is a single-aspect house with all the main windows on one side, denying the pleasure of morning sun. But it also gives privacy as the land falls away sharply to the west. For those with dogs, there are four acres of fenced grounds down the hillside with three levels of paths.

On top of the bedroom block, adding a Cubist touch, is a freestanding water tank which looks like a recipe for frozen pipes but, says Mrs Marlin, "we've never had a problem even in the coldest weather. It's a box in a box with a cavity in between."

Teesdale is a modern classic, built for people who want to be at one with nature. As I drove away at dusk, a large roe deer skipped past.

Agent: Kate Floyd at Footprints 0171-616 7003.

In 007's footsteps, pages 24-25

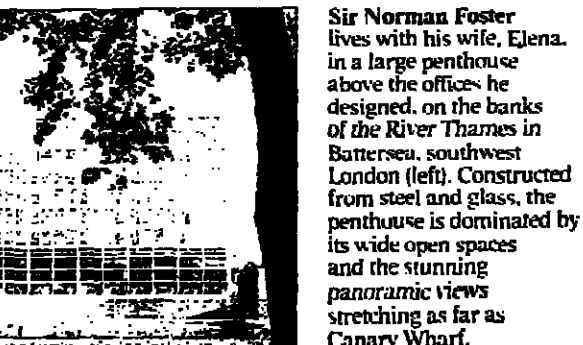
AN EVERYDAY TALE OF MODERN MANORS

ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION

Sir Michael Hopkins, CBE, lives with his wife Patricia, in a self-designed steel and glass-constructed building in Hampstead, north London (right). The property, built in 1976, cost £30,000 for the site, and a further £20,000 to build. It can only be reached by a drawbridge and from the outside appears to be one storey high, although it is in fact two.



Lord Rogers of Riverside lives with his wife Ruth, co-founder of the River Cafe, in a large house in Chelsea, west London (right). While the exterior is typically early Victorian, the interior is modernist. Two floors of two houses have been knocked into one, and walls have been removed to create a vast space of two storeys dominated by stainless steel.



Sir Norman Foster lives with his wife, Elena, in a large penthouse above the offices he designed, on the banks of the River Thames in Battersea, southwest London (left). Constructed from steel and glass, the penthouse is dominated by its wide open spaces and the stunning panoramic views stretching as far as Canary Wharf.

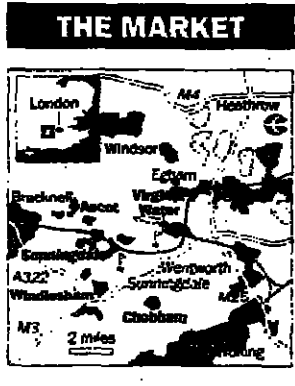


THE AREA around Windlesham, on the Berkshire border of the Surrey stockbroker belt, is about 20 miles southwest of central London. With its string of palatial homes, it has long been fashionable with wealthy London emigres and foreign buyers looking for family homes.

They are attracted by the rustic charm of the area, with its leafy, affluent villages of Sunningdale, Ascot, Chobham and Virginia Water, by its golf courses, such as Wentworth, by its schools, and by its accessibility.

Trains to Waterloo from Ascot take 50 minutes; the M3 is on the doorstep, the M25 is a ten-minute drive away; it is 20 minutes to Heathrow and 40 minutes to Gatwick.

Although you can buy a small modern semi-detached house around Windlesham or Sunningdale for less than £120,000, the majority of homes cost a great deal more. Prices are among the highest in the Home Counties. They rose 15 per cent and more in the first six months of this



THE MARKET

supply. The average cost of a three-bedroom detached character cottage in Sunningdale is £250,000; about £275,000 for a new four-bedroom executive detached house; and £670,000 for a five-bedroom period house, according to a recent report on house prices from Hamptons International.

Demand for two-up-two-down Victorian terraced village houses, costing from £120,000 to £150,000 in Windlesham, often exceeds supply. Halifax Property

Services says the market for properties under £300,000 has cooled, however, because of purchasers' worries about rising interest rates.

The smartest address in Westwood Road will set you back at least £2 million for a new five-bedroom five-bathroom house in half an acre. Windlesham's mansions (most owned by oil-rich Arab sheikhs) are still sought after by cash buyers, despite price rises of up to 30 per cent this year, says estate agent Knight Frank.

Large country houses with land are rare — move closer to Guildford if you want to buy one of these. New houses dominate the top end of the market. Expect to pay anything from £500,000 to more than £1 million for a modest five-bedroom house on half an acre, near Ascot. A six to eight-bedroom 1930s house with a pool, tennis court and an acre or two will cost £2 million or more — if you can find one for sale.

CHERYL TAYLOR

HOME SWAP

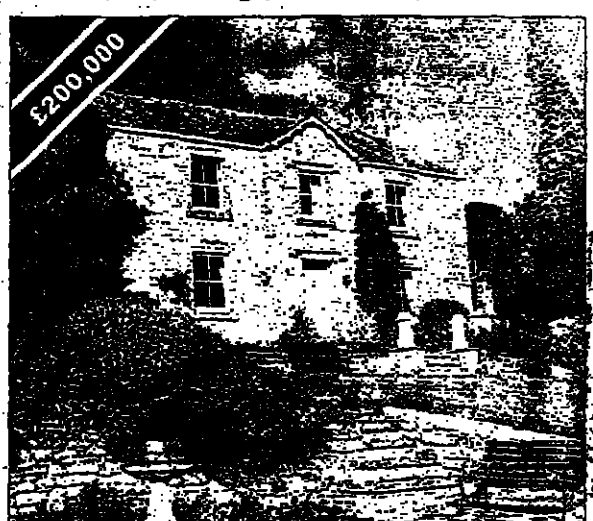
DEMAND FOR two to five-bedroom Victorian terraced houses, costing from £200,000 to £500,000, in Putney and Barnes, southwest London, pushed prices up 30 per cent in the first half of this year, according to estate agent Allen Briggel. Now there are more houses on the market, purchasers are no longer willing to pay over-the-odds and prices have stabilised.

Stone and slate cottages around the lakes of Windermere, Conistone and Grassmere are selling fast, from £70,000 to £150,000 for two bedrooms, despite price gains of 15 per cent this year. Larger period houses are also sought-after, from £300,000. Buyers are coming from Manchester and Liverpool looking for second homes. A three-bedroom house with a boat house on Lake Windermere recently sold for £750,000. Its guide price was £450,000, says estate agent Matthews Benjamin.

You still get a lot of house for your money in northeast Scotland. There has been no property boom there, and prices are stable, says Savills. Country houses within commuting distance of Aberdeen cost from £150,000 to £200,000 for up to five bedrooms. Georgian houses in Royal Deeside fetch from £550,000 for six bedrooms and a good area of parkland. For £850,000 you could buy a restored 17th-century castle in five acres.



This restored two-bedroom end-of-terrace Victorian house with a south-facing rear garden in The Retreat, a secluded Barnes backwater on the outskirts of "Little Chelsea", southwest London, will set you back £207,500 (Allen Briggel, 0181-392 1635).



Offers over £200,000 are being invited for Holywell House, a detached stonebuilt five-bedroom period house, in beautiful terraced gardens, on the edge of Helton Village, overlooking the Lake District National Park. It is currently run as a country bed & breakfast and has parking for six cars (Penrhin Farmers & Kidos, 01768 862135).



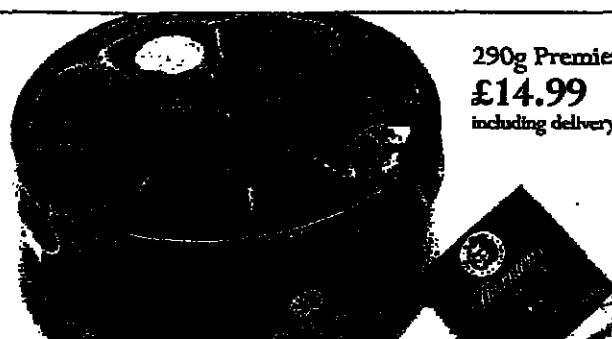
North of the Border, Drumbair Lodge, a Grade II listed 18th-century, five-bedroom country house in 3.2 acres of wooded grounds, at Forgue, by Huntley, Aberdeenshire, can be had for a similar amount. It is approached by a drive and a gateway with stone pillars and comes with stone outbuildings (Savills, 01356 622187).

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Diaries

The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, is Tom Whitelaw, of Bearsden in Scotland.

Sixties wonder on shaky ground

A mix of formal planting and modern sculpture makes the Gibberd garden worth saving, writes Stephen Anderton

Marsh Lane, the garden of the late Sir Frederick Gibberd, at Harlow, Essex, has a wonderful collection of fine architectural ornament and modern sculpture. But its future hangs by a perilously thin thread, with a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund pending.

Often when you see a picture of Marsh Lane in print, it shows a lonely architectural or sculptural detail in close-up. Why on earth do we never see the impression this garden really makes — the use of plants, the spaces, and the way they accommodate and work with the sculpture?

It is partly the fault of fashion in garden photography. Give a symmetrical formal garden to garden photographers these days and they will turn in fabulous, moody shots, all taken on the diagonal, with the elements of the picture beautifully balanced.

But that is not the garden itself. It is the garden through someone else's eyes — a reinterpretation. The classic formal shots never appear, because editors are afraid to use them in case the image has already appeared in a dozen glossy garden-illustration books.

This architectural image is Marsh Lane's problem. And yet it is a wonderful garden, not just for its glamorous sculptures but for its horticulture, for its planting.

It is one of the few important designer gardens of the late 20th century. But unless it gets a lottery grant, to keep it going and open it to the public, the estate will eventually go on the market as a house (not a very special house) ripe for redevelopment.

The decline of all gardens is a furious descent, and not at all the peaceful, romantic fading away which sunshine and a few wild roses would let us believe. Gardens go quickly, but quietly, as one plant eats another for breakfast.

Marsh Lane is a lovely garden. A bit woolly around the edges, perhaps, and in need of some serious pruning, but full of fascination and charm. Sir Frederick Gibberd was the architect and master planner of Harlow New Town. He was also a talented landscape designer.

The site is his major essay in



The fine lines of a terracotta pot contrast with a wild woodland area

garden design. It was his all-consuming hobby between 1956 and his death in 1984. Since then it has got by with what skills and labour Lady Gibberd has been able to muster. But she is concerned that the garden's horticultural elements are fading fast.

At Marsh Lane there exists the perfect opportunity to keep a great garden of a recent period going in all its detail, while it still exists. Whatever details have slipped away could be replaced by looking through Gibberd's drawings of the garden.

But why bother to fund the preservation of a modern garden, you may ask? Well, for one thing, it is a garden of "garden rooms" and enclosed vistas, but free of the domineering plantmanship of Sissinghurst or Hidcote. It is a fine example of a freer and more modern style. It would be an inspiration to the present generation of young gardeners.

Admittedly, the Sixties produced some cheap and nasty work, but should we throw out everything that was well-made then too? Look at the variety of modern paving techniques at Marsh Lane, look at the novel juxtaposition of clipped and unclipped evergreens, like exotic grafted cacti or the back view of peacocks.

This garden needs saving from a fate worse than total loss — from being preserved as a mere sculpture park. The garden is registered

Grade II in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, which means it is recognised for its national importance. But to let the garden linger on, without the gardening intended to complement the sculpture, would be to give modern gardening a bad name. The gardening is every bit as important as the sculpture. They need each other.

The garden deserves to survive because of all the efforts of its trustees and those who have given money to the Gibberd Garden Appeal to save it. When Sir Frederick Gibberd died, he left the garden to Harlow District Council, for the recreation and education of the people of Harlow. But the will was contested and the estate became a debtor through litigation, *la Bleak House*.

The house and garden were saved from sale on the open market by a generous and anonymous benefactor, who bought the property as a holding measure, and gave the Gibberd Garden Trust precious time to find the money to restore it as a public amenity.

That was in 1995. What will the lottery now decide? Time and anonymous goodwill do not last forever.

● The Gibberd Garden, off Gilden Way, Harlow, is open every Sunday, 2-6pm, from Easter Sunday until the end of September (01279 442112).



Bust of Sir Frederick Gibberd by Gerda Rubinstein. The garden was his all-consuming passion



■ Give winter protection to tender perennials (*Melianthus major*, *Salvia* spp., *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, *Dahlia merckii*) with bracken, old fern fronds, or a ventilated cloche. Keeping the soil dry is often more significant than keeping it warm.

■ Plant rhubarb in well-manured ground, and cover established plants intended for forcing with a rhubarb pot or light-proof bucket.

■ Complete the digging of vacant borders and vegetable plots on heavy or clay soils, and leave them rough for the frosts to break them down. On light or sandy soils, digging can be done throughout the winter and early spring, at your convenience.

■ Lime, if required to correct soil acidity for vegetables, should be applied before digging and in the autumn, to bring the soil up to pH6.5 or pH7 (neutral). Lime applied in spring at the same time as fertilisers or manures containing ammonia will allow the ammonia to escape as gas and go to waste. A rule of thumb for quantities is half a pound of ground limestone to a square yard on light sandy soils, extending to a pound and a half on heavy clay soils.

■ Regularly collect and burn fallen rose leaves to reduce the spread of diseases such as rust and black spot next spring. Some infection will remain on the twigs and branches, but the chances of controlling the problem are better where reinfection is minimised.

■ Tie in long stems on vigorous climbers (ivy, *Hydrangea petiolaris*, *Pileostegia viburnoides*, *Schizophragma hydrangeoides*, and species of *Parthenocissus*) before winter winds can break them. Cut off loose or forward-pointing growth on any self-clinging climbers which seem reluctant to cling. This will reduce the effect of winter winds on the already-clinging roots or suckers, and allow them to consolidate their hold before the weight of new growth recommences next spring.

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Better shred than dead

Stephen Anderton
puts hedge clippings
from last summer to
good use with the
latest shredder

I am tempted to put an advertisement in the local paper asking for other people to give me their leylandii hedge clippings. I am turning them into mulch, with the aid of a shredder.

Cupressocyparis leylandii, bless it, gets a terrible press. On good land with a high rainfall, leylandii cypresses grow to massive proportions at a phenomenal speed — 4-5ft a year is possible.

On the other hand, the competition of life in a mature hedge slows it down, and on poor, dry soil the effect is yet more marked. As a fast-growing and short-term hedge, leylandii take some beating. They will even grow in exposed positions if planted small or supported carefully until they are anchored.

You can clip them only once a year, but do not expect an easy job. A top short on a young, hard-growing leylandii can be as fat as your thumb in six months, making cutting with mechanised trimmers heavy going or even impossible.

If it is cut two or three times over the season, it is much faster and easier to do, and the surfaces of the hedge look less chopped and more dense. Ultimately, it extends the life of the hedge — and most certainly that of the trimmer.

I have a couple of 12ft runs of leylandii on the boundary of my garden. On this poor, dry soil it makes only a couple of feet of growth a year at the top, and only a foot or so of growth sideways.

But that is fine by me. I can cut the little-finger-thick top shoots with secateurs in late summer, even doing the sides with secateurs, taking the longest droopy shoots hard back by a foot or more, and nipping a few inches off the shorter ones.

This produces a less clipped effect, and it merges into the adjacent evergreen shrubberies. Next year I might do away with the hedge's flat top altogether, and let it become a long link in the shrubbery.

But what to do with all those prunings? (Prunings they certainly are, and not clippings. They are woody.) I thought I would try shredding them to make a mulch for new plantings around the garden, to conserve the moisture in the soil.



Waste not, want not: astute recycling goes a long way, as mulch, made from readily available clippings, helps to preserve moisture in the soil

Shredders were always tricky things. Traditionally they jammed. They screamed and tore and whined and swore as they sliced away at your prunings.

There were, and still are, semi-commercial shredders powered by their own petrol engine, or working off a mini-tractor. The best work on the principle of the wood passing through a flail in a drum, and they happily reduce thick twigs to little pieces. Fatter pieces require a chipper mechanism with a blade, and neighbours might mistake the sound for an air display.

Bigger commercial machines are designed for the tricky problem of shredding otherwise indestructible cemetery wreaths. You can throw a brick into these just to see if they are working properly. They work all right, and sound like a Sherman tank at top speed.

I have been using the new Quiet Shredder from Atco, priced at about £350. Unlike the other amateur electric shredders, it operates on

relatively few revolutions per minute, dramatically reducing the noise.

It has a rotating hook-toothed drum, past which all the twigs are slowly pulled, crushing them against an opposing block. The noise level — a cheery, productive rumble as it fills its clip-on swag bag with chips — is remarkably low.

This is not the sort of noise to trouble a neighbour, and you could use it without embarrassment at the weekend, or even indoors. The shredder even manages to crack the wood across the grain into little chunks.

That might be what you would expect with dead twigs, but it still worked perfectly well on sappy new leylandii twigs.

By avoiding feeding it anything fatter than recommended (the mouth of the machine itself limits the size of wood you can put in), I had no jamming problems. Even the finer scrapings-up and bits of foliage were all pulled through the machine

satisfactorily, although they were a little on the thin side for the machine to chop small.

The hedge prunings were soon transformed into a heap of mulch used to dress the soil around new shrubs. I could have stored it in a heap and allowed it to begin decomposing, but it was doing no harm around the shrubs, and it certainly made watering easier. Instead of the soil becoming caked and water-repellent, the soil under the chips continued to soak up a canful every time. I only wish I had had the machine last year when some free-standing leylandii were about to engulf the garden.

No domestic shredder is happy chewing on daggy, soft, wet stuff, so I never put anything with a lot of wet leaves, either broad-leaved or coniferous, through it.

But then, no one chooses to cut a hedge after a downpour, so the prunings can go straight into a shredder. That's one less pile of waste going unnecessarily to landfill.



Atco Quiet Shredder in action

GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON
repplies to readers' letters

Q I have a plant in my garden grown from seed taken from Crete three years ago. It is now 12ft high and spreading sideways. It has large glaucous leaves and greenish-yellow tubular flowers, but I have no clue what it might be. Any ideas? — M. Walicki, Benfleet, Essex.

A I see from your sample that this is a species of tobacco, *Nicotiana glauca*, a tender shrub from South America. It is naturalised in the Canary Islands, and would probably do well anywhere with a Mediterranean climate. I have even seen it growing on a south wall in north Norfolk this year, but in Britain it is at risk outdoors. A cool conservatory would suit it better in the long run. Enjoy it while you can, and protect it in winter. That succulent-looking green-grey leaf is certainly appealing, and if fed and watered hard, the leaves will be the size of your hand. In hotter, leaner conditions they can be less than half that size.

Q At about this time of year, our lawn spontaneously exhibits a succession of puffballs. It is obviously a good environment for these fungi, and I would like to cultivate the large, classical, red-capped toadstool. Is this practical, how do I start, and is there a specialist cultivator? — M. Scott, Shrewsbury.

A This is a touch of adventurous gardening and I wish you luck. *Amanita muscaria* is an attractive although potentially poisonous organism. Read Roger Phillips's book *Toadstools* for a description

of the extraordinary trances and intoxications induced by this fungus in the Lapps and their reindeer. Your problem is that the conditions that suit a puffball do not necessarily suit an *Amanita*. Fungi vary enormously in their needs. *Amanita* is a woodland fungus, and makes cosy, mycorrhizal associations with birch and pine trees. It also likes the fibrous, open-textured soil surface found under those trees. I know of no suppliers of spawn of non-culinary fungi, so your best bet will be to find a ripe *Amanita* and break it up under any trees you might have on the lawn, preferably birch or pine. A handful of soil from the growing site might be helpful too, for spores and mycorrhiza.

Q You recently advised that a beech tree should be pruned in late autumn. But both beech trees and hedges should be pruned in early July, according to my book. Please clarify. — W.L. Astle, Brannhall, Cheshire.

A Beeches do not like heavy pruning. If they must have it, then late autumn is a good time, when the leaves are off and the sap is down. It is trimming (cutting back twigs and thin branches by clipping a hedge, or the formative pruning of young trees) not major pruning, to which your book refers. This should indeed be done in summer.

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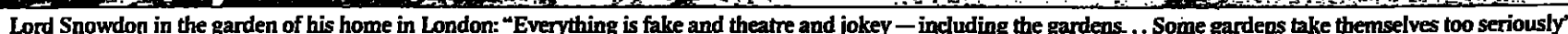
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ME AND MY GARDEN: EARL OF SNOWDON

In the Sussex garden that he has made from nothing over the past 25 years, theatre and trickery, surprises and japes dot the sloping site. A double row of upturned roof-ridge tiles leaping from the house pour a trickle of water into a garden

"My mother always said she hated good taste but she had the best taste of anyone I know," Lord Snowdon says. "She used to buy clothes from C&A and make something wonderful of them."

He shows me some pictures of the house in Barbados, where he regularly stayed with Messel in the



Sussex garden.
When he lived in Wales and Yorkshire, he and his sister had

Even as a child, wild, hard landscaping rather than plants caught his imagination. In his stepmother's Yorkshire garden he made a large tree-house in an oak

Lucy's room — around a vast, old lime tree the planners refused to allow him to cut down. The leaves spout from the arms of the cupola on the Complete Bastard pavilion.

"And I've improved this garage

"Would you like to see a picture of me with Glenn Close?" Another big grin. A scrapbook is opened. Lord Snowdon is portrayed leaning against a street sign: Glen Close.

JANE OWEN

A weeping-face water feature

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HOW SUITABLE IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW?

- 1 St Bernard — Huge dog (average weight 75kg) which easily fills the back seat of a car. It has a phlegmatic temperament, doesn't need a lot of exercise and a short-lived (not many live longer than ten years).
- 2 Boxer — Big, active and good-natured, weighing about 31kg. Needs to be entertained; loves the company of dogs. Short coat, needs little grooming. Suits families with teenagers.
- 3 Weimaraner — Long white coat, hairy feet and a mind of its own. Needs a conscientious owner with time to spend on grooming and training, but a well-trained snarler is a pleasure. Weighs about 23kg.
- 4 Labrador — Working dog which needs occupation: it makes a good gun-dog, guide dog or sniffer dog and a first-class family dog. Obesity can be a problem as it will eat almost anything. Weighs about 30kg.
- 5 Afghan — An elegant, glamorous dog that can look wonderful if time is spent grooming its coat. Aloof, even stand-offish with strangers, but bred to chase at high speed, so even at 30kg can cover 100 yards in ten seconds.
- 6 German Shepherd — Guard dog par excellence. It has a mind of its own, so needs a firm owner, respected by the dog. Highly intelligent and can be taught to do almost anything. Big, at around 36kg, with plenty of energy.
- 7 Pug — Devoted pet (average weight 7kg), which doesn't need much exercise and is happiest pottering round the house and garden. Inclined to snore and snore in old age and, like all of the smaller breeds, lives a long time, into its late teens.
- 8 Chihuahua — Smallest breed in the world, weighing about 2kg. Easy to pick up, but not a dog for children — dropping from a child's arms is the equivalent of our falling from a first-floor window. Good house dog that will bark to tell you when anyone's about. Short-haired ones need no more than a polish with a duster, but the long-haired variety takes more time.
- 9 Corgi (average weight 12kg). The Pembroke variety lives in palaces: the Cardigan has a long tail. Small dogs, easily carried. The dense undercoat keeps water out but can collect mud — and worse. With hearty appetites and short legs, weight-watching is essential to avoid owning a walking barrel.
- 10 Great Dane (bigger varieties can weigh 90kg). A short-haired giant, which requires minimum of grooming. Too big for most cars or laps, but tall enough to look down on other dogs and to treat them with tolerant disdain. Usually good with children, but an accidental bump will knock a toddler to the ground.

Puppy love: a good breed guide

How many of the 160 breeds of dog at the Kennel Club show today at Earls Court would make good pets?
James Allcock sorts the pooches from the pedigrees

Every vet has heard an unhappy dog owner say: "We wouldn't have chosen this breed if we had known how much trouble they were or 'we fit so sorry for him in the pet shop'. Pet-owning is like marriage — you may have years of leisure in which to repent of your impulses — and it pays enormous dividends if you consider carefully which breed to acquire.

Choosing the right animal is no simple matter. The Kennel Club recognises more than 160 breeds of dogs — all shapes, sizes and colours, long-haired, short-haired and almost hairless, with widely varying temperaments and activity levels. One family's perfect pet can be totally unsuitable for someone else — although nearly 7 million dogs are kept in 5.4 million households, so it looks as though most people do make the right choice.

There are scores of reasons for spending time choosing your first, or next, puppy. It is important to match owner and dog: energetic breeds need energetic owners, long-haired ones need regular grooming or pet parlour visits, and working dogs need to work.

Size is also crucial. Giant breeds such as mastiffs, Irish wolfhounds, Pyrenean mountain dogs and St Bernards, weighing between 85lb and 160lb, take a lot of heartthrob and car space — and long-haired giants have acres of coat to groom. But they take life at a pedestrian

pace, always prepared to lie down and wait for something to happen. Big dogs also cost more to feed and have a shorter lifespan than their smaller cousins — a St Bernard is old at ten, whereas many Cairn terriers are going strong at 16. These giants are too big to be a family dog, but they do not need a country estate, and can have a good life in a large-roomed flat or town house with adult owners who enjoy long, leisurely walks.

If you want to go one size down (those between 45 and 85lb), there are plenty of breeds to choose from, including most of the Gundogs. The name "gundog" is actually an historic classification — a dozen generations of breeding for show or pet purposes has made many "gundogs" terrified of the sound of a 12-bore. Real gun-loving Gundogs, such as a spaniel, retriever, Labrador, setter or pointer, need to spend their days working and retrieving game, so they are only worth adding to your family if you have time to work them hard on a farm or in a park.

If you are considering one of these breeds, it is worth thinking about their coat length. Some retrievers have a double coat and if they live in a centrally-heated house they shed hair all year round and

need thorough, regular grooming. Cocker spaniels' long, hairy ears need careful brushing every day so they stay "lightweight" and do not block their ear canals. Most of the Spitz breeds such as Samoyeds, Keeshounds, Elkhounds and Chow Chows also fall into this category. They have a dense "stand off" coat, their hairs are at right angles to the skin and their tails curl back over the spine. They are also paragons of virtue: for the past 30 years, chow breeders have concentrated on producing amenable dogs, and have succeeded.

Many breeds in the Kennel Club's "working group" — collies, sheep-dogs, German shepherds, boxers and rottweilers — are also in this weight range, but they need a purpose in life: guarding a flock, herding animals or simply pleasing their owner by following his or her commands.

A working sheepdog (the *One Man and his Dog* type) will go mad if confined to a suburban house for 22 hours a day, as will

slight hounds such as greyhounds, borzois, afghans and salukis, which hunt by sight and gallop at high speeds over short distances — even a slothful greyhound will take little more than 30 seconds to travel 500 yards. But these few minutes of high-velocity activity are usually followed by a few hours of relaxation, convenient for owners with limited spare time.

Dogs between 15lb and 45lb are easily portable and include most of the terriers except Airedales and Yorkies, which enjoy digging holes, chasing balls and investigating, and so are excellent pets for a family with active children. They also include Staffordshire bull terriers, which have been the dogs in my life for the past 20 years. They are hard work to keep, because they're so busy, but the short coat needs little grooming.

Corgis, both Pembroke and Cardigan, also fit this size category. Their ancestors were cattle dogs which encouraged cows to move on by nipping their legs — a propensity not totally obliterated in some strains; although the breed standard requires corgis to be

"outgoing and friendly", they don't always comply.

Whippets weigh around 25lb and have all the virtues of the larger sight hounds such as greyhounds. They are seen as slightly shy dogs because they often seem to tremble, but this is a sign that they are ready to go, rather than unhappy or afraid. They're short-haired and non-aggressive, so make an excellent pet for a urban family.

The real tinsies, below 15lb, may be too fragile for family life with rumbustious children. However, because they are inexpensive to feed, are easily picked up and need equally little exercise, they make excellent companions for those of advancing years. I would recommend a short-haired breed such as a smooth chihuahua, pug, miniature pinscher or Italian greyhound, although they must all be groomed: too many Pekingese, Poms and similar long-haired tinsies get into a mess, and even maggot-infested if they are not kept clean and tidy. Once the breed has been chosen,

the sex of the dog is the next question. My preference is for a bitch every time. They're gentler, usually smaller than their brothers and their maternal instinct extends to a kindness and care for children. Males of every species are aggressive and their negative virtues extend to fighting, wandering and cocking legs on the cabbages. Whichever sex is chosen, there's a lot in favour of neutering.

It is vital to know as much as you can about a puppy's breeding. It is worth visiting the home where it was born so that you can check the mother, and often the father, of the litter. It is nearly always the case that the offspring of "nice to know" parents will probably grow up with the same virtues. If mum and dad don't appeal, I would advise saying thanks but no thanks, and looking elsewhere.

Watch carefully, too, when you arrive. When a litter of pups trot out for your inspection (they're really having a good look at you) there will be a boss pup who leads and a last in line that is shy and retiring. Take note. If you're extrovert and strong-minded, the lead pup will be an excellent choice. If you like a quiet life, the last one out might be best.

The final factor to consider is cost. You will pay between £100 and

£350 for a healthy, quality, fully-registered pedigree pup, and more if its owners believe it will have a show or breeding career. If buying for a pet, the puppy must have a perfect temperament: an unwanted white hair or slightly short ear flap won't matter at all.

Dogs, of course, also have to be fed. In 1996, dog owners spent £667 million on prepared pet food and £84 million on "treats", representing a food bill of almost exactly £100 per dog per year.

Vet fees can be covered by pet health insurance costing £60 to £100 per year, but you will still have to pay for boosters, which cost about another £30. Kennelling during your holidays will cost between £4 and £7 a day and clipping, stripping or shampooing hairy dogs can cost another £100 in the year — which all adds up to shelling out about £5 to £10 a week for many years to come.

Dog breeders rarely worry about what's said about them, but criticising their breed is another matter. So now I'll retire to my bunker hoping to avoid the slings and arrows fired because I've been disrespectful to one breed or failed to mention another.

● You can find out the pluses and minuses of more than 160 breeds from experts with no axe to grind (since they won't be trying to sell them to you) at the Kennel Club's Discover Dogs show. See below.

Fashions that last one shake of a shar-pei's tail



The komondor: victim of a permanently bad hair day

Would you know a bergamasco from a havanese? Do you think a bracco italiano is (a) a liqueur, (b) a cheese or (c) a penalty box manoeuvre by Juventus? Wrong answers to any of the above show you might have a way to go in the world of fashionable dog ownership. For those are just some of the latest pedigree breeds to come to Britain, and will duly be displayed at today's Discover Dogs show at Earls Court, west London.

With about 160 pedigree breeds already in this country, highlighting the endless combinations of canine genes, one could ask do we need any more? Well, yes, it seems we do — as long as trends in novel dogs continue, and there are customers in the canine marketplace willing to pay a high price for them.

"There will always be people for whom dogs are status symbols," says Claire Horton-Bussey, editor of *Dogs Today*. "They want to be able to walk down the street with something different on a lead and have everyone look at them."

Dogs with impressive show-winning histories also carry snob-appeal. Phil Buckley of the Kennel Club knows of "wealthy people who'll collect expensive dogs like others might collect classic cars", and cites one American who

Carol Price on the danger of succumbing to the fads for exotic breeds

recently bought a top show bull terrier in this country for £35,000 "just as a pet".

The more ornate pedigree pups in Britain can cost from £100 to £850 depending on source and background. The rarer or trendier ones can cost more than £1,000.

If you wanted a truly different dog, they don't come more



Disney's 101 Dalmatians set a trend for the spotty dog

idiosyncratic than the good old British bulldog. According to the Kennel Club's external affairs executive, Brian Leonard, pups are going for up to £1,000 despite this breed's notorious health problems — breathing difficulties and birth complications — due to its over-exaggerated anatomy.

Mr Leonard attributes the bulldog's lasting appeal to its role as "the lovable, dependable comedian of the canine world" — a sort of Les Dawson of a dog. If you wanted more of a Liam Gallagher on a lead, however, it could be something like the komondor. This is an expensive Hungarian sheepdog with the potential for a permanently bad hair day. Its coat comprises intricate dinky tassels, like a high-performance mop, which must be expertly arranged and coiffured. Described as "very noisy, temperamental and often aggressive", the komondor has fans who will insist there is no dog quite like it, and few would argue.

If you had between £2,000 and £3,000 to spare you might secure one of the limited dogs de Bordeaux pups available here. This is the fren mastiff which was endearingly portrayed alongside Tom Hanks in the film *Turner & Hooch*. But beware: not only is there that fertywash of slobber to contend with, but the Kennel Club refuses to recognise the breed "mainly because of its past associations with dog fighting".

So which are the other must-have dogs of the moment? Ms Horton-Bussey says: "Anything vaguely wolf-like, such as the Siberian husky or Japanese akita. People seem to love the idea now of having this raw, wild kind of dog. They think it's romantic."

But the reality often isn't. Ian and Diana Sidwell, long-time owners of akitas in the Midlands, say they are continually having to tell potential buyers that a dog bred for



The British bulldog: "The lovable, dependable comedian of the canine world"

hunting bears is not likely to make the most amenable suburban pet.

"Akitas are wonderful, loyal and affectionate dogs," they say, "but they are also born hunters. Their tendency to chase down any small animal and be dominant with other dogs means you might have to keep them constantly on a

lead. They are strong-willed, require firm handling, and can moult horrendously."

Such considerations bring us to the most serious aspect of canine faddism: that when dogs are bought on a whim they can be discarded in the same way. "People thought shar-peis were wonderful when they first arrived here

some years ago, with their cute wrinkly folds of skin," Mr Leonard says. "Then they discovered the breed had eye, immune system and skin problems, and those little folds made them smell."

"Everyone also wanted a dalmatian after the Disney film until they realised they had 70lb of muscle that would rip the place apart like a bored teenager unless they got miles and miles of exercise each day."

Mr Leonard maintains that a central aim of Discover Dogs will be to tell people about the dogs they shouldn't buy as much as those they should. Not only are some more exotic breeds "best left to specialists", he says, but when dogs fall victim to fading fashion, the only people left doing brisk business are rescue centres.

● Tickets for Discover Dogs are available from the Kennel Club Hotline (0171-518 1012) and the Earls Court box office (0171-372 5511).



Costello: a character

ADOPT ME

COSTELLO is an eight-year-old black and white male cat who has been at the Godmanchester branch for more than a year. He is full of character, and gets on well with other cats, but would be better suited to a home with no other cats, dogs or young children. If you would like to adopt Costello, call Wood Green Animal Shelter (01480 330014, ref: KC82235).

A VET WRITES

Should Humphrey the cat have been moved from 10 Downing Street?

The medical bulletins about the Prime Ministerial cat have not been too precise, but the clinical details of the great have always been shrouded in mist. Winston Churchill suffered one or more severe strokes while PM, although few knew about this at the time. Anthony Eden and Harold Macmillan ended their careers surrounded by medical pronouncements — which varied with the political needs of the hour. And did any one actually hear George V's wish to commit an illegal sexual act upon Bognor?

Both "kidney failure" and "incontinence" have been suggested as reasons to move Humphrey to live in south London. But these are two totally different conditions.

If Humphrey's kidneys are wearing out — and he has reached the age when his pin-striped namesake would be entering sheltered accommodation — then the cat will benefit from the move. Hopefully the house will have an enclosed garden and one person responsible for his well-being. His carer will know where he is, and what and when he's eating and drinking. As a No 10 cat he was everyone's cat but his absence noticed if he went missing? Or was it assumed he was terrifying the ducks in St James's Park?

Wet patches could be territory marking — deliberately urinating to scent-mark his boundaries. Which is hardly sensible incontinence. Cats do this when something has changed and there is a threat to a comfortable existence. If this is what has happened, then moving will add to the stress. Eleven-year-old cats can find it difficult to cope with changed surroundings.

Humphrey's relocation might be the best for him, or it might simply be convenient for others. Time will tell, but will we ever be told?

JAMES ALLCOCK

● Write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9YN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

'I can turn the inside of our house into a replica of Stringfellows nightclub if I wish, but I may not change a window frame'

Homes that fail to make the grade

It's a dog's life, living in a listed building. Ask Ivy, the sheepdog-lurcher cross who hit the headlines recently by refusing to live in the kennel her owners provided for her. It was no ordinary kennel. Attached to what is described as a "masterpiece" of a house, a converted abbey near Bristol, the kennel has been classified as Grade I. It cannot be altered for other uses.

This does not impress Ivy. Despite being built of the most beautiful textured stone, the Tudor kennel holds no attraction for her. No doubt Lord St John of Fawsley will be down there, salivating over it; but Ivy pants only reluctantly. It's cold, it's draughty. Law forbids any alteration so she prefers the kitchen.

None of this surprises me. Anyone who has tried to do their best for animals will confirm that, by and large, they are unappreciative lot. Horse and pony owners will tell you of the expense to which they have gone to provide a shelter in a field so that the horse can get out of the wind and rain. But come the first snowfall or blast of Arctic air, where will the horse be? Standing in the middle of

the field, unprotected, rear end to the wind, ignoring everything the weather can throw at it. If you are looking for a pastime, take note as you drive round the countryside of how many times you see a horse standing in a shelter its owner has provided. A sight as rare as hen's teeth, as they say around here.

Cattle are just as bad. A fine cow shelter was the first building we erected on the farm. It was built of our favoured material — old telegraph poles — and was a structure of the lowest grade imaginable. Nobody would have listed it except under "firewood". But it would have kept the rain and snow off the cows if they had ever bothered to stand under it. They didn't. And pigs are no better. For our farrowing sows, I used to arrange a snug little maternity unit complete with deep, chopped straw so the piglets would not lose themselves in the bedding, an infra-red bulb to keep them

warm, and sacking across the windows to keep out draughts. This was hugely enjoyed by the sows until the moment of farrowing when they plunked themselves down in the draughtiest corner of the pig run and got down to business. It is like pregnant mothers in Queen Charlotte's abandoning the linen sheets on feeling the first twinges, and going outside to give birth in the bus shelter. There is no pleasing some.

But life for anyone in a listed building can be tricky. We live in a Grade II listed farmhouse. It's no big deal. Houses are listed if built before a certain date: it is as

DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

let with old people, there are many grumpy old souls fit only for bulldozing and others that you would wish to preserve for ever. Merely being old is no great virtue in itself.

What is even more irrational about the

simple as that. It is not necessarily a measure of the virtue of the building, just a recognition of the fact that it is old.

Our house certainly isn't special — just a typical East Anglian, long, thin farmhouse. I have often thought that listing on the basis of age is a simplistic approach to the preservation of dwellings.

If you draw a parallel with old people, there are many grumpy old souls fit only for bulldozing and others that you would wish to preserve for ever. Merely being old is no great virtue in itself.

listing of houses is that often the only thing which is protected is the outside appearance. As a planning officer once explained to me, I can turn the inside of our house into a replica of Stringfellows nightclub if I wish, but try to change a window frame and the full weight of the planning law will descend upon me.

But anyone who understands houses appreciates that facade matters for very little when it comes to the freight business of daily life. Some of the grandest creations are dreary holes, spooky and drab. Did anyone really think Mentmore would have been a happy place to live in? Does anyone go home from a Buck House visit wishing they lived in one of those icing-sugar halls? On the other hand, I have been in badly-constructed cottages built to a mean specification, and found a welcoming warmth which an entire

estate of National Trust houses could not muster. It goes without saying which will be preserved, and which flattened at the slightest hint of a new supermarket.

Having said that, I have no alternative way of assessing properties worthy of preservation than the one we employ. To judge the convenience and feel of a home would require an assessor to dwell in the house for at least a week, if not longer. And life is difficult enough without a knock on the door from a planning officer, complete with pyjamas, telling you he'll be moving in for a fortnight to reassess your "listing", which he believes might have changed since you swept the chimney and got the kitchen window unstuck at last.

So pity poor Ivy who will not snuggle up in a kennel over which more socially ambitious dogs might fight. She has come up with a grading system of her own, based on how she feels: just as we all do about houses old and new. It must be galling for her owners that she has given it the paw-down, but it proves that what constitutes a decent home is more complex than planning laws admit.

Gone but never forgotten



Peter Birkett visits Margate to commemorate the last century's worst British lifeboat disaster

It is ten days since helicopter winchman William Deacon died in the Shetland seas as he tried to save the crew of a stricken cargo ship. By unhappy chance, Deacon's sacrifice comes exactly 100 years after the last century's worst British lifeboat disaster.

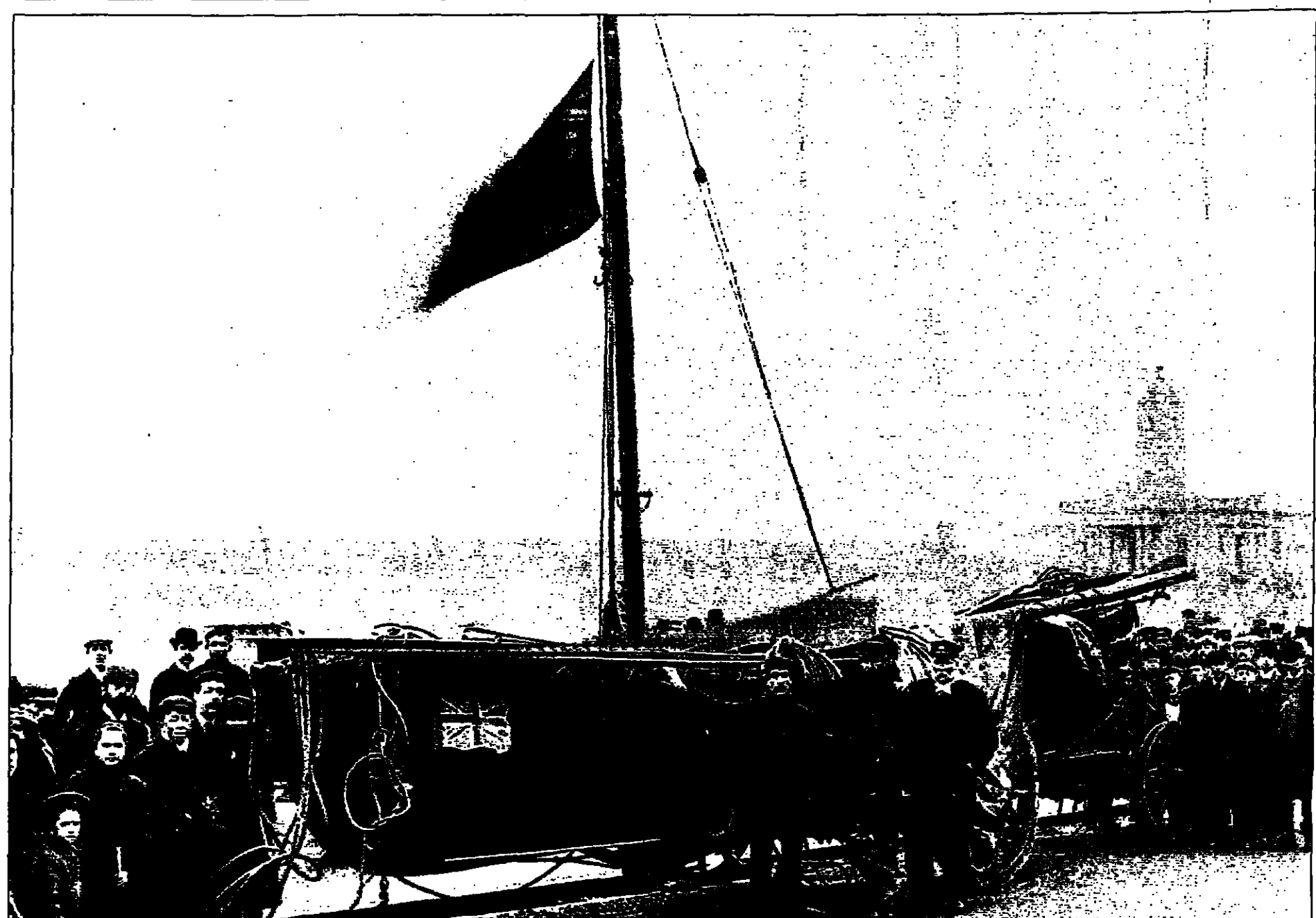
The memory of the Margate surfboat disaster of December 2, 1897, remains vivid in the Kent resort which gave nine of its gallant men to the sea.

Tomorrow, hundreds will gather on Margate seaford to take part in a simple wreath-laying ceremony. Later, the townspeople will be joined by a handful of descendants of the dead crewmen at a service of remembrance.

It will be, says John Farmer, the 62-year-old great-grandson of George Ladd, one of the crew who perished, an occasion for "awed respect" for the men whose names are still recalled in the town's pubs.

Even in the days when life at sea was cheap, the Margate disaster stunned Britain. Twenty thousand people attended the funeral. Five who survived were feted as heroes for the rest of their lives and a fund for the relatives of the dead raised nearly £10,000, the equivalent today of almost £1 million. Queen Victoria sent a personal cheque for £35.

At the time Margate had two lifeboats, the RNLI's *Quiver* and a lighter, faster 32ft surfboat, owned by the



The recent Shetlands tragedy (above left) recalls the day 100 years ago when surfboat *Friend to All Nations* capsized in hurricane-force winds off the Margate coast (above)

town's fishermen, called *Friend to All Nations*. Both boats were crewed from a pool of 120 men deemed eligible as lifeboatmen and, because of the opportunities to earn considerable sums from salvage

claims, competition was fierce for a place aboard.

But the speed of the ten-oared *Friend* made her the favourite, and, when the alarm was raised, the lifeboatmen would dash to get a place aboard her.

The terrible events of 1897 began when a great storm hit the east coast on November 29, with hurricane force north-easterly gales which blew for days. At 3am on December 2, the duty coastguard saw distress signals from a vessel, the cargo ship *Persian Empire*. Twenty minutes later, *Friend* launched from the harbour slipway, the race won that day by 13 men: William Cook Snr (Coxswain), Henry Richard Brockman, William Cook Jnr, Robert Cook, Edward Crunden, John Dike, William Gill, George Ladd, Henry John Brockman, Joseph Epps, John Gilbert, Robert Ladd and Charles Troughton, the superintendent of the Margate Ambulance Corps.

As the *Friend* made her way into the huge breakers, other lifeboatmen prepared to launch *Quiver*, finding their way blocked by the surfboat's launching trolley, almost certainly left on the slipway as a delaying tactic.

Aboard *Friend*, the crew



The lifeboatmen who lost their lives in the rescue attempt

were pulling powerfully on the oars towards the Mayland Rock, off the western end of Margate. But just as she rounded the rock a huge sea rolled in and, despite valiant efforts by Cox'n Cook, the vessel capsized.

Following exactly the same route as the *Friend* in the wild seas and pitch darkness, the crew of *Quiver* were unaware of the tragedy unravelling in the very waters they were sailing. They held their course past the rock, out towards the *Persian Empire*.

Mr Epps, one of the *Friend*'s five survivors, later recalled the last moments of the stricken surfboat as he and William Cook Jnr clung desperately to the gunwales. Cook, said Epps, cried out: "Oh dear, Oh Lord. She's going!"

Epps found himself beneath the upturned boat and was able to jam his arms between the thwart, keeping his head in the air-pocket. Still submerged, he was rescued when the boat was smashed ashore. Three others, Henry John Brockman, John Gilbert and Robert Ladd, also made it back but the others drowned.

News of the disaster swept Margate in an instant. Thou-

sands gathered on the seaford as dawn broke. As the day unfolded, Troughton's body was the first to come ashore, then that of Cox'n Cook. By nightfall there five women had been widowed and 14 children were left without a father.

Margate went into mourning as a single mass grave was dug. The entire town turned out to watch when ten days later the coffins of eight of the crewmen were carried along the seaford on the *Friend*'s launching trolley. The ninth coffin, that of Troughton, was carried on an ambulance litter by members of the Margate Ambulance Corps.

Within hours of the disaster the mayor announced the setting up of the relatives' relief fund. There was criticism of the decision to spend a large sum on a marble monument, rather than provide almshouses for the widows and orphans.

There was also resentment, which lasted for years, that the widows would receive a weekly allowance of 15 shillings from the fund. The children would get half a crown.

Today the controversy, unlike the brave men, is long forgotten. And tomorrow for the people of Margate will be a day for quiet pride.

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ON THE SPOT: TANTALLON CASTLE

Rural recommendations

The place: Tantallon Castle, North Berwick, East Lothian.

The view: overlooking the Firth of Forth and, ahead, the small island of Bass Rock and its lighthouse.

The appeal: a formidable castle in a rugged setting.

Afficionados: Friends of Historic Scotland and overseas visitors.

Historical interest: it was built in the 14th century and played a defensive role for 300 years. One such siege began after Archibald, the fifth Earl, entered a treasonable pact with Henry VII of

England to deliver James IV into English hands. King James survived the siege.

How to get there: take the A198 to North Berwick and the castle is three miles east.

OS ref: 996/851 on sheet 67.

Time to visit: open all

year round except Thursday afternoon and Friday during winter.

Also nearby: nature trails along the coast and the volcanic crag of Bass Rock, now a wildlife sanctuary and home to a colony of gannets.

DEBORAH KING

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Once the sport of the aristocracy, falconry has begun to catch the imagination of all classes, says Rohan Daft



The actor James Robertson Justice was a keen falconer. Nick Kester with his gosh hawk Freya: the pair regularly hunt at dawn before Mr Kester commutes into London

Winged winners in the talon contest

From the flash of the white button of a tail to the small and final squeak took less than ten seconds. In between, came the ominous sound, some 30 yards distant, of wings beating and the soft tinkle of a small bell. The gosh hawk had taken its quarry.

Had it been something more appealing than a rabbit in the advanced stages of myxomatosis it would have been shared out: the fillet going into its owner Nick Kester's pot and the rest to the bird. As it was, the hawk was quickly recovered and the horribly mutilated rabbit dispatched and disposed of. Within a minute or so, we were off again.

Falconry — taking a wild quarry by means of a trained hawk — has been enjoying something of a renaissance. Numerous courses have sprung up for beginners. For those who have neither the time nor inclination to own their own bird there are various falconry centres where birds — for the most part Harris hawks, the easiest hawks to handle — can be

hired by the day or half day. (Incidentally the difference between hawks and falcons is that a falcon can be a hawk, but a hawk can't be a falcon.)

The fashion designer Alexander McQueen is a big fan, as his collection for Givenchy earlier this year — all eagle wings and feathered corsets — reflected. Rob Wainwright, the Scottish rugby union player, also goes hawk, as does the actress Miranda Richardson, though she doesn't actually hunt anything. The Duke of Edinburgh, the Prince of Wales and Princess Royal keep up the age-old royal tradition of hawking at Sandringham.

But what was once very much a sport for the upper-classes is now, if not quite a sport for the people, certainly fast becoming the field sport for the people.

"It's completely classless," says Mr Kester, spokesman of the 1,000-strong British Falconers' Club. "It has become more artisan. A lot of falconers now choose their careers so

they can go hawking. I know an awful lot of shift workers."

Mr Kester, who works in marketing, hawks from dawn every day before setting off for his London office. The sport is not prohibitively expensive (an introductory lesson costs about £50 and a decent hawk, such as a Harris, will set you back between £500 and £600 — about the same as a decent mountain bike). In the words of a number of its new-found participants, hawking is fast becoming "the acceptable side of field sports".

The beauty of the bird helps — Mr Kester's bird, Freya, fiercely amber-eyed, is about two feet long and has a wingspan of about three and a half feet — but what undoubtedly contributes to this "acceptability" is the nature versus nurture aspect. Although the League Against Cruel Sports is opposed to hawking, its greatest concern is not the hunting of animals by other animals, but the

conditions in which some hawks are kept. Little happens in hawking that doesn't happen in the wild, and, on top of that, the majority of hawkers hawk for the pot. Indeed, if anything, the taking of a rabbit by a trained bird is a far less painful act than it is in the wild where a gosh hawk, for instance, will eat a rabbit alive.

But that doesn't mean that falconers (and there are some 3,000 that actually own and fly their own birds) feel any less threatened by proposed anti-hunting legislation than other field sportsmen.

Substitute my flailing at a hedge-row with a stick to flush out rabbit for the more traditional "backing a point" (where two pointers locate and flush out their prey) and the passing of Mike Foster's Anti-Hunting Bill would put an end to that particular method of hawking for rabbit and hare.

The hawking fraternity's greatest fear is possibly appeasement. Mr Kester says: "Falconry was banned in Denmark to appease the green lobby.

There are only about 3,000 falconers in this country (compared to some 250,000 who hunt) and that makes us very vulnerable". For all its newfound popularity, and the existence of the British Falconers' Club, the social camaraderie of hunting and shooting — the balls and dinners — doesn't really exist with falconry. Mr Kester says: "It is a solitary sport. Most falconers go out alone or with only one other falconer."

After a day out in each other's company in Kent we ended up empty-handed. Freya flew five times but took nothing but one diseased rabbit. "You need infinite patience," said Mr Kester as we made our way home. "James Robertson Justice was a very keen falconer, and he said: 'It takes a comparatively short time to train a falcon and about seven years to train a falconer.'"

Information on introductory courses and lessons can be obtained from the British Falconers' Club, Home Farm, Hines, Nr. Tamworth, Staffordshire B78 3DW (01543 481737).

Drumming up interest

FEATHER REPORT

SNIPES ARE a more familiar sight in winter than they used to be. This is not because they are more common but because there are now so many more nature reserves with hides looking out on to pools with boggy edges — just the sort of place where snipe like to doze all day before going off to dig for worms at night.

I have often watched them from a few yards away, with their amazing long beaks, and a most beautiful pattern of golden stripes on their mantle. But if you just walk through wet meadows or marshes in winter, all you see of them is a bird leaping up with a rasping cry, zigzagging over the ground, then towering up and away into the sky. That is the challenging sight that sportsmen seek out.

After Christmas the snipe start returning to the moors and bogs, where they breed, and then they become easier to see. As the days grow longer, the males begin to fly around their territories, making a loud "ticker, ticker" call, then plunging down to earth, making a humming or buzzing sound that has been likened either to a bleating goat or to distant thunder. It is an extraordinary sound, and once gave rise to a fierce debate.

In Victorian times, it was generally believed that the "drumming" (as it is generally called) was produced vocally. Some people, however, thought the sound was made by the rapid movement of the bird's wings. But as the snipe descends, it can easily be seen that its two outer tail feathers are sticking out at right angles to its tail.

So a number of experiments were conducted with two snipe outer tail feathers. They were attached by wire to a stick and the stick was whirled round. They were also attached to an arrow, which was shot into the sky and fell back to earth.

In each case, they produced the snipe's drumming sound, and it is generally accepted now that the tail feathers do the trick. It is a very haunting note if you hear it as you walk across the moors at twilight — hard to locate at first, and rather ghostly.

HOWEVER, a long rear-guard action was fought by ornithologists who continued to believe that the drumming was a vocal note, and reports still occasionally appear of snipe apparently drumming while sitting on the ground. Some of these reports may simply be errors of observation or hearing, but it has also been suggested that the tail feathers can be activated in a strong wind.

Nevertheless, a faint air of mystery still hangs about the snipe, and no doubt next spring, here and there, the debate will spark into life once again.

DERWENT MAY

● Feather Reports, a chronicle of a year's bird life by Derwent May, based on his Times articles and illustrated by Robin Jacques, is published by Robson Books at £12.95.

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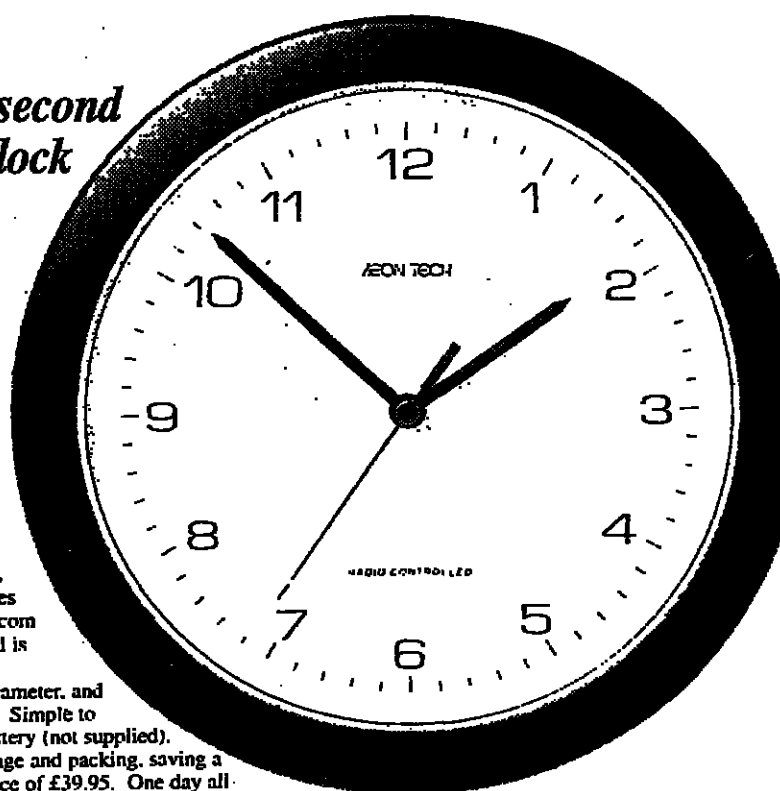
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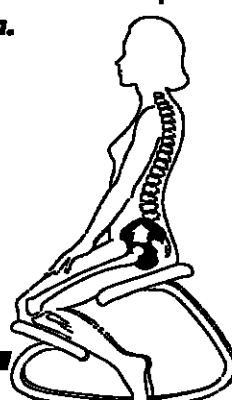
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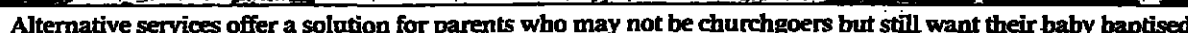
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He insists that all baptisms take place in the context of a Sunday morning service, so that parents have some sense of the community they are supposed to be joining.

Others have decided to restrict baptism to those practis-



ing Christians who are sincere in it. To provide for the insurance, a loose network of Anglican vicars is experimenting with "naming services," known to their opponents as "anti-christenings."

"It's inappropriate to baptize the children of households who are not effectively believing," says the Rev Andri Bowsher, Vicar of St Augustine's Bradford, a priest who writes his own "anti-christening" services.

Mr Bowsher's technique when parents come to him, is to discover whether they actually want their child to grow up a Christian, with a family and godparents who will nurture it in the faith.

If this prospect frightens them, he offers them his own service, based on the Service of Thanksgiving in the *Alternative Service Book*. "If people are making promises they don't intend to keep, that is wrong," he says.

Mr Bowsher's service starts with a prayer of thanksgiving for the child's birth, and then the parents name their child: "Almighty God," he says, "We present N to you. Look with favour on him/her, help him/her grow ever closer to you and order his/her life to draw him/her to fullness of faith.

"N, may Almighty God deliver you from darkness and lead you into the light of Christ, and the blessing of God: the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you, now and always. Amen."

The parents are asked: "Will you try to be trustworthy as a parent, patient and understanding so that your child may always be sure of your love and grow to be secure and responsible?"

The congregation is asked to make wishes on the child's behalf and join in a prayer of blessing. So whatever the language used, there is plenty of God in the service, but no baptism.

This, says Mr Bowsher, is a "better service" for most of the people who come to him, and he encourages them to call it a christening which can cause trouble later, when the parents discover that almost all priests use "christening" only to mean baptism.

His attitude is the Rt Rev the Bishop of Ely, the Archdeacon Stephen Sykes, who is chairman of the Church's doctrine commission and suggests that there is a danger of working-class parents being bullied by middle-class priests.

Clergy who interrogate prospective parents like that are bamboozling them. It is an abuse of literacy."

Dr Sykes expresses himself with unusual passion, partly because he recently found himself in a London taxi whose driver had been put through just such an interrogation when he wanted his own baby "done" and welcomed the chance to work off his feelings on a captive parishioner. "He was taking his hands from the wheel to shake them with fury," said the bishop.

His own solution, when a parish priest, was to offer as godparents members of the congregation, who could fulfil the vows they made to nourish the child in faith. To Mr Bowscher, this is "frankly silly."

At the General Synod this week, new baptismal rites were on the agenda under the responsibility of the

Bishop of Salisbury, the Rt Rev David Stancillic, who is chairman of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission. He believes that he may have found a way through the minefield, with new vows for the godparents that do not require them to pretend they are zealous Christians.

Simply by wanting to have their children baptised, he argues, the parents and godparents have shown an openness to faith, though many priests would reject that notion on theological grounds.

The dispute goes right to the heart of the Church of England's position in the nation. *The funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales*, demonstrated that people will come to church in emergencies — but most of the spontaneous religious activity had no priestly Christianity and the only bits of the service that made a real impression were those performed by the amateurs, Tony Blair and Art Spencer.

Anti-christenings are only a small part of a wider problem: how far can the church compromise itself in its efforts to reach a population that neither believes nor wants to?

FOR nearly 30 years, beneath the gilt legend: "Wherein they rejoice with gladness evermore", church leaders and their flock have variously talked and fought over issues such as women priests in meetings of the General Synod of the Church of England.

This week, for the first time, the synod gathered in the circular assembly hall of Church House, Westminster, for a significant departure from usual practice. The 500-plus members, including more than 20 bishops and even an Archbishop, decided to celebrate communion together.

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AFTER-SERVICE CARE

of St Albans, the Right Reverend Christopher Herbert, spokesman for our image of God. "When I was a curate and taught in Hereford, I asked the youngsters what they thought God looked like. Some said he was an old man with a beard. There was a 14-year-old girl said God was a boy of about nine with blond hair.

"It was surprisingly specific so I asked her why," she said was: "Because that's what he's really like." Another boy told me C was not a person at all, but a corridor full of television sets all taking to each other." A bit like the synchro we agreed.

As it happens, the synod had already thrown out the proposed new eucharistic prayers, so when we progressed through communion, it was back to the ASB, before returning to the new version for the breaking of the bread and the giving of the bread and wine.

Although more flexible than before and better written, the new service is little different to the old. The sense of communion was different, arousing speculation that maybe there was something new about the synod after all.

✠ Church House, Westminster
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as they migrated across Europe, we find increasing references to them as good Christians. In England they made their first recorded appearances in Elizabethan baptism registers. Gypsies were also often to be found among those making Christian pilgrimages to holy places. The medieval penchant for journeys appealed to a people who were natural travellers.

Indeed, the nomadic culture of the gypsies has obvious parallels with Judaeo-Christianity — not least in Abraham "the wandering Aramean", the late journey of the Israelites through the wilderness from Egypt to the Promised Land, and in Jesus who

redo

**NIGEL
cCULLOCH**

had "nowhere to lay his head". The Acts of the Apostles refers to the early Christian disciples as "The Way".

Many gypsy legends are coloured by biblical stories which were assimilated into their tradition. These legends often have about them the poignancy of a suffering people. Some refer to gypsy origins and, in

particular, to God's curse on Cain in Genesis 4:12 "a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth".

Other tales say that a gypsy persuaded Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus and that gypsies and smiths forged the nails for the Cross. In fact there is no evidence to show that there were any gypsies in Palestine at that time. Nevertheless, unmistakably woven into so many of these legends is the belief that their nomadic existence and the sufferings and rejection they endure are a form of divine retribution.


Forced to live by their wits, often guilty of sharp practice and sometimes dishonesty, the gypsies faced

increasingly repressive measures soon became scapegoats for many others. Elizabeth I accused them of hiding priests and, in 1563, ordered them to leave the country.

Similar coercive measures in other countries followed. But none has been more terrible than the Nazis' mass sterilisation and murder of the gypsies in this century. Sterilisation and gassing of gypsies was carried out at Auschwitz and in 1945 all gypsies who remained in concentration camps were gassed. It is this that makes so horrifying the words shouted recently by Slovakian skin-heads at the gypsies fleeing to Kent: "Go to the gas chambers, gypsy."

Last month, Slovakia's President Vlastimil Meciar said: "The so-called 'Roma' are a scourge of this already unadaptable and mentally backward population." Such chilling echoes of Nazism must not, I believe, be left unchallenged. Every gypsy, like us, is made in the divine image; and, under God, is our neighbour.

● *The Right Rev Nigel McCulloch is Bishop of Wakefield*



The celebrant Canon Michael Perham

The celebrant: Canon Michael Perham

There are many men and women preachers throughout Britain delivering fine, well-constructed, enjoyable sermons, who deserve recognition beyond their own congregations but who fail to achieve it. Ruth Gledhill, religious affairs correspondent of *The Times*, recognised this, and the result was *The Times* Preacher of the Year Award 1995. The collected sermons for 1995 and 1996 have since become bestsellers.

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The first Sunday of Advent
ARMAGH CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 M.
Canon J M Barton; 3:15 Carols and
readings for Advent.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:45
Cyril Beneditig; 11 Ch Euch; Darke in F;
3:15 E; 5 Grown.

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 M. Re-
sponses: Archer; 11 S Euch; Darke in E;
3:30 Advent procession.

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP;
9:15 HC; 11 Ch Euch; 4 Advent procession
by candlelight.

BLAKELY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:15
Ch M; Canon Hall; 10:30 Euch; Darke in E;
6:30 Procession and Advent carols.

BRECON CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 11
Service of Music and Readings for Advent;
3:30 E; Word in E flat No I.

BRISTOL CATHEDRAL: 7:40 M; 8 HC;
9:30 E; 10:30 Service for Advent.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC;
9:30 M; 11 S Euch; 3:15 Achen carol service;
6:30 Sermon & Compline.

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7:45 M; 8 HC;
10:30 S Euch; 10:45 Advent carol service.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7:30 MP;
8 HC; 9:30 Euch; 11:15 S Euch; Rev J
Moody; 6: Advent service.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 Euch; 11 M;
3:30 Advent procession; 6:30 ES.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10
HC; 11 S Euch; 3:30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL:
Dublin: 11 S Euch; Mass for 5 voices (Byrd);
8 Advent procession.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Ox-
ford: 8 HC; 10 M and Sermon; 11:15 S Euch;
Advent procession.

CORK CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 11:15 S
Euch; 7 Advent service.

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7:40 MP; C;
10:30 Euch; 5 E; 7 Advent procession

DERRY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10:45 S
Euch; 4 EP; 6 Advent carol service.

DUNDEE CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M;
11:15 HC; 3:30 E; Responses: Ayleward;
7 Advent procession with carols.

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8:15 HC; 10:30 S
Euch; 6:30 Advent procession.

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:45 S
Euch; 11:15 M; 3 E; Wood in E flat; 6:30
Advent carol service.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10
HC; 10:15 Euch; Rev J Hubbard-Jones; 12:15
S Euch; 11:15 M; 3:30 E.

GULDFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:45
S Euch; 11:30 M; 6:30 Advent procession.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M;
10:30 Euch; 4 Advent carol service.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10:30
S Euch; 3:30 EP; 6:30 Advent Liturgy.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL: 7:45 L; 8 HC;
9:30 S Euch; 11:15 M; 12:30 HC; 2 Bishop
Grosseteste College Advent carols; 3:45 E.
LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL: 8 MP &
HC; 10:30 Euch; Canon M Boyling; 3
Advent service; 4 HC.

MALDEN CATHEDRAL: 7:30 M & L;
S Euch; 11 S Euch; Darke in F; 12:15 Euch;
3:30 Advent procession; 6:30 E & Sermon.

MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8:45 M;
9 Euch; 10:30 S Euch; Canon J Atherton;
6:30 Readings and music for Advent.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7:30 M; 8
HC; 9:30 S Euch; 11:15 Short Services; 6
Music and readings for Advent.

NEWTOWN CATHEDRAL: 10:30 M;
6:30 Music and readings for Advent.

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 7:30 MP; 8;
9:15 HC; 10:30 S Euch; 3:30 EP; 6:30 Advent
procession.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9:30 M;
10:30 Euch; 3:30 E; Collegium Regale
(Howells); 6 Procession of Advent carols.

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC;
10 S Euch; Messe solennelle (Langlais); 4
Advent carols.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:45
M; 10:30 S Euch; Canon R Lea; 3:15 E; 6:30
Advent carol service.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10
Euch; 11:20 M; 3 Ch E; Responses: Lloyd; 7
Advent carols.

SHEFFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10
MP; 10:30 S Euch; 6:30 Advent procession.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch;
11 Ch Euch; Missa Brevis (Berkeley); 6:30
Advent carol service.

SUTHWELL MINSTER: 7:45 Litany; 8
HC; 10:30 M; 11:15 M; 3:30 E.

TORQUAY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M;
9:45 E; 5 EP; 6 Advent carol service.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:15
C; 11 Solemn Euch; Ireland in C.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:45 S
Euch; 11:20 M; 3 E; 5 Advent carol service.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 8 HC; 10 M;
11:15 Euch; Missa brevis (Walton); 3 E; 6:30
ES; Canon D Gray.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7:8, 9,
10, 30 Sol; Mass; 12 Mass; 2:45 Organ
Recital; 3:30 Sol & B; 5:30, 7:45 Euch.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7:35 M;
10 S Euch; 3:30 E; Stanford in C; 6:30 St
Swithun's School Advent service.

ST ALBAN'S CATHEDRAL, Hertford-
shire: 8 HC; 10:30 Euch; 11 Solemn Euch;
6:30 Advent procession.

ST ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, Aberle-
ben: 8 HC; 10:15 S Euch; Missa Ave
Jesu (Olskroyd); 6:30 Advent carol service.

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC;
11 Ch Euch; 3:30 Advent carol service.

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9:30
Euch; 11:15 Ch M, Ireland in F; 6 Advent
procession with carols.

ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL:
8:30 HC; 10 S Euch; Ireland in C; 11:30 HC;
9:30 Advent sequence of music and words.

ST MACHAIR'S CATHEDRAL, Old
Abertillery: 8 HC; 10:30 Euch; 11:15 M;

ST MARV'S CATHEDRAL, Edinburgh:
8 Euch; 10:30 S Euch; Rev J Conway; 3:30
EP; 6:30 Advent carol service.

ST MARV'S CATHEDRAL, Glasgow:
8:30 Euch; 10 S Euch; 12 HC; 6:30 Ch E.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin:
8 HC; 10:30 S Euch; 11:15 Candlelight
Advent procession and carols.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8:45 M;
11 S Euch; 3:15 E; Rev S Oliver, Howells in
E; 6:30 Advent carol service.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHED-
RAL, London: 7:30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan
rite; 10:30 Holy Communion, Mel Anthony.

ALL SAINTS, W: 8 LM; 10:20 MP; 11
HM; Mass for 4 voices (Byrd); 4:30 EP; 5:15
LM; 6 Advent carol service.

ALL SOULS, W: 8 C; 9:30, 11:30 MP; Rev
D J Dwyer; 6:30 Advent carols.

THE ASSUMPTION, W: 11 MS, Missa
diut. Maria (Hasler).

ST CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC;
10 Children's Service; 11 M; 12:15 HC;
6 Advent carols.

ST JOHN'S BAPTIST CHURCH OF SCOT-
LAND, W: 8:30 AM; 9:30 AM; 10:30 AM;
12:30 PM; 11:15 M; 6:30 ES.

FARM STREET, W: 8; 9:30 EU; 11 HM;
12:30 LA; 4:15, 6:15 LM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW7: 8 HC;
11 MS; 5:30 Informal Service.

THE ORATORY, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 Mass;
Missa Trinitatis (Domini) (Handel); 12:30
Mass; 1:30 V & B; 4:30, 7 Mass.

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH
WS: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Ghadrin.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL EC2: 6:45 HC; Rev
D R Griffiths; 11 MS.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL
(Westgate), EC2: 11 Mass for 6:30 ES.

ST AGNES' ST AGNES (Luthall),
Gratham St, EC2: 11 Ch Euch; Rev P D
Schmieg; 3 Advent lessons and carols.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT,
EC1: 9 HC; 11 Ch Euch; The Rector; 6:30 E,
First Service (Morley).

ST BRIDES, EC4: 11 Ch M and Euch;
Dyson in F; Canon J Oates; 6:30 Advent
carols.

ST CLEMENT DATES, WC2: 11 Ch M,
Beedeide (Purcell); 12:30 HC.

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOT-
LAND, SW1: 11. The Archbishop of
Canterbury; 3 Scottish Festival Service;
6:30, Rev W A Cairns.

ST ETHELREDRA'S, EC1: 11 S Mas-
si; St. West Wind Mass (Turris).

ST GEORGES', W1: 8:30 HC; 11 S Euch;
Missa Bel Amfittir Altera (Lasso).

ST JAMES'S, W2: 10:30 S Euch, Mis-
sae Coeli de super (Haydn), Rev
Wilson; 6 Advent procession.

ST JAMES'S, W2: 8:30 HC; 11 S Euch, 11
Sophia-Wind Mass; 5:45 EP.

ST JOHNS', E15: 8:30 HC; 10:30 S Euch;
6:30 Special service for World AIDS Day.

ST LUKES', SW3: 8 HC; 10:30 S Euch; R;
B Newton; 6:30 Advent carols.

ST MARK'S, NW1: 10:30 S Euch; Mass for
voices (Byrd), Canon P J S Edwards; 3
Advent services.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8
HC; 9:45 Euch; C H Hart; 11:15 Visitors
Service; 2:45 Chinese Service, R
G Lees; 6:30 Advent carol service.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8:
8:30 HC; 10:30 S Euch; Rev M Hamish; 11:15 Ch
Euch; 6:30 Advent carols.

ST MARY'S, SW1: 9, 10 LM; 11 HM;
Canon Halliburton; 6 Sol E & B; 7 LM.

ST MARY-TH-VIRGIN, NW3: 8 HC;
Rev D J Dwyer; Plainsong Mass, Rev D Jones;
6 Advent carol service.

ST MARVLEBONE, NW2: 8 HC; 11 C
Euch; Mass for voices (Byrd); 6:30 Advent
carols by candlelight.

ST PAUL'S, SW1: 8, 9 HC; 10 Solemn
Euch, Missa octavi toni (Lassus), Rev
Dawson.

ST PETER'S, SW1: 8:15 HC; 10 Famili-
ar Euch; 11 S Euch; Missa Simile est regnum
F Gaudy; 6:30 Elyer.

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AL-
VINCLIA, HM Tower of London: 9, 10
HC; 11 M & Sermon. Responses: Byrd, R
P C Abram.

CHAPEL RO

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Top to toe festivities

DECEMBER 5-7

Multi-Activity Weekend in Snowdonia. Get some exercise before Christmas, climbing, abseiling, white-water rafting and canoeing. With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083). Price £150, full-board, including equipment and instruction.

Skiing Workshop and Practice. Get ready for the slopes with a day or a weekend at the Calshot Activities Centre, Calshot Spit, Southampton (01703 892077). Price £45 per day, including lunch and equipment.

Fell-Walking Weekends in the Lake District. With Mountain Goat and Countrywide Holidays (0161-448 7112). From Grasmere to the more remote fells. Prices from £133, including accommodation and transport.

A Guided Tour of the Universe. The Natural History of Christmas. Reading Latin documents. Three courses at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £117, tuition and accommodation.

Top-to-Toe Hair and Beauty. Stained Glass Lighting Design. Three courses at the Lancashire College, Chorley (01257 260909). Price £96, all-inclusive.

We Were Amused — Entertainment and Leisure in the Victorian era; The Music of Spain. Two lively courses at the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, West Sussex (01798 865306). Price from £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

Handmade Chocolates for Christmas. A Christmas Bridge Party. Competitive Duplicate Bridge with Partners for Singles. Painting on Silk Yarn. All at the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). Price per course, £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

Folk Music for Fun. At the Belstead House Education and Conference Centre, Ipswich (01473 686321). From £75-£95, full board.

The Music of Sibelius: Sir Gavain and the Green Knight. Tombs of the Pharaohs. Some of the courses at Dillingham House, Ilminster, Somerset (01460 55866). From £24 a day or £115 per weekend.

Drawing for the Terrified (painting). At the Alston Hall Residential College, Longridge Preston, Lancs (01772 784661). From £75, full board and tuition included.

Life Painting in Oils. Blacksmith-



Making tracks: off-road driving is available on the Welsh Marches

ing for Beginners. Basic Woodworking and Carpentry. At the West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential and £97 non-residential.

Certified First Aid. A useful course for families at Braziers, Ipsden, Wallingford, Oxon (01491 680221). Price £112, tuition and full board.

Arms, Armour and Fortifications of the Middle Ages. At the University of Oxford, Dept of Continuing Education, Rewley House (01865 270360). Price £44, accommodation by arrangement.

From Hastings to Bosworth Field. A history of medieval warfare at Higham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cumbria (017687 76276). From £112 residential or £72.50 non-residential.

DECEMBER 12-14

Off-Road Driving: Learn to Ride. Two active weekends on the Welsh Marches with Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083). From £144 to £249 for two nights, depending on activity and accommodation.

Advent Reflection and Celebration. At the Ammerdown Centre, Bath (01761 433709). Prices from £69, all inclusive.

The Natural History of Christmas: Winter Walks. Outdoor courses at Urchfont Manor, Devizes, Wilts (01380 840495). Prices from £99-£104, inclusive.

Life Painting in Watercolours. Floral Craft. Two courses at the Alston Hall Residential College,

Preston (01772 784661). Prices from £75-£80 inclusive.

Brace Yourself for Christmas. At Braziers, Ipsden, near Wallingford, Oxon (01491 680221). Price, all inclusive, £92.

Christmas Crackers or The Folklore and History of Christmas. Why do we kiss under the mistletoe? When was Christmas made illegal? At the Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 6586). Price £98.

The Bardic Mysteries. At Hawkwood College, Stroud, Gloucestershire (01453 759034). Prices from £111 to £119, inclusive.

Wine Appreciation: Christmas Walks and Talks. Poetry at Christmas. At the Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny (01495 333777). Prices from £88-£112.

History of Opera: Beginnings and Monteverdi. Japanese Tamari Balls and Chinese Rice Dumplings. The Dracula Myth: Embroidered Caskets. A range of courses at Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Bucks (01494 890296). Prices from £159 residential and £69.20 non-residential.

Silk Painting: Academic Drawing in Tone. Calligraphy: Adornment of the Garden. All at West Dean College, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 811301). Prices £150 residential and £97 non-residential.

Folk Dancing for Singles. With HF Holidays at Malhamdale, Yorkshire (0181-905 9558). Price from £149.

English Cathedrals: Trollope and Hardy. The Way We Write Now. Both at the Maryland College,

Woburn, Beds (01525 292901). Prices from £99, inclusive.

Putting People in Pictures: Making a Traditional Teddy Bear. Wines for Special Occasions: The Alexander Technique. At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Pulborough, West Sussex (01798 865306). Prices from £114 residential, or £90 non-residential.

The Jacobite Challenge. 1688-1759: Images of Royalty: The War Plays of Euripides. Burne-Jones in context. A range of courses at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price £117, inclusive.

Christmas Canapés: Cities of the Baltic. Botanical Illustration. All at the Earmley Concourse, Chichester, West Sussex (01243 670392). Prices from £142 residential, £98 non-residential.

DECEMBER 19-21

Paintball Shooting and Adventure Games. Quad Bike Racing. All at Kingsland, Herefordshire, with Acorn Activities (01432 830083). Price £130.

Winter Walking: Circle Dances. Both at the Wedgwood Memorial College, Bursledon, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs (01782 372105). Price, £80 all-inclusive.

Health and Beauty Weekend. At the Springs Health Hydro, Packington, Leicestershire. Pool, sauna, exercise room and beauty treatments: £245 for three nights, full board. Details from Solo's (0181-951 2800).

Brush Up Your Oil Painting Techniques: Calligraphy. Both at the Alston Hall Residential College (01772 784661). Price £75, inclusive of instruction and full board.

A Winter Solstice Celebration. At Braziers, Ipsden, near Wallingford, Oxon (01491 680221). Price £92.

Line Dancing. Learn all the steps to a range of wild Western dances at the Burton Manor College, South Wirral (0151-336 5172). Price £98, inclusive.

Popular Music in Theatre and Film: Painting Birds and Animals. Art courses at the Pendrell Hall College, Staffordshire (01902 434112). From £86.40 residential or £60.50 non-residential.

A Practical Opera Weekend. on Eugene Onegin at the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall Cambridge, (01954 210636). Price £117, inclusive.

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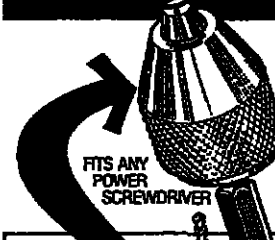
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ARDEN ANSWERS



A cross-Channel Christmas guide

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I'm too young to go cruising

Lynne Truss was not prepared for the pace of life on a cruise to Singapore

There is no better way to learn about the stamina of the elderly than to take a cruise at Christmas. Last December I had the great good fortune to join a Swan Hellenic "Christmas in Paradise" cruise from Sri Lanka to Singapore, but made the basic error of embarking in a state of mental and physical breakdown. I had visions of joining a deck full of nodding grey heads, eyes closed, with perhaps one ear tuned to a mind-improving lecture. On a gentle and restorative winter sunshine cruise, I could sleep my way towards the new year among people who understood.

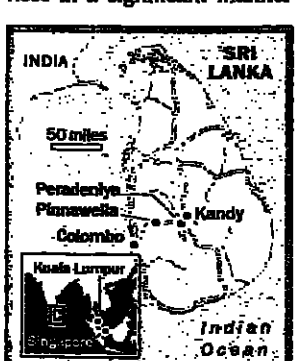
However, your average Swan Hellenic cruiser is not a nodding grey head. Your average Swan Hellenic cruiser is busy from dawn to dusk with lectures and excursions, borrowing textbooks from the library, brushing up on earth science and attending concerts. Oh God. Most of them may be old but trust me: a wake-me-up-in-ten-years appeal arouses no sympathy from this focused bunch — no sympathy whatsoever.

Let us consider the first 36 hours of the trip. On December 22, we arrived at Colombo after a long, overnight flight; we embarked, unpacked, took a bus into Colombo, went for a walk in appalling heat, caught a bus back, took part in a confusing emergency boat drill, dressed up for dinner, and then got up again at six o'clock in the morning for an all-day coach trip to Kandy, the ancient capital of the island, three hours inland (and uphill) from Colombo.

Well, that was me done in already, and we had not even started. "Aren't you tired?" I would beg fellow passengers on the tour bus. But they were not. Their fitness was such as to make both fiddles and fleas look quite peaky by comparison.

As I understand it, most cruises have compulsory discos and karaoke competitions, so I was right about one thing. On Swan Hellenic's handsome, compact and civilised *Minerva*, you are not dragged into activities, even the very pleasant ones. You are unmolested entirely.

If you wanted, you could spend the whole week just closeted in the card room with a famous bridge player, never moving except to rub your nose in a significant manner.



during the bidding. (Some people did just that, in fact. They disappeared rather suddenly and were next seen queuing for the flight home.) You could also spend happy hours just observing other passengers, in particular the celebrities. On Boxing Night, you see, Dame Judi Dench with her husband Michael Williams and daughter Finty were due to deliver a rehearsal reading. You would hardly believe how much excitement this added to each day. "Dame Judi's in the pool!" we all informed each other, in whispers. "And, don't look, Michael Williams is having a pint!"

Yet somehow those shore excursions still beckoned inexorably, and I found myself attending them all. It was something to do with generational pride. If the oldies were willing to clamber on that coach, I felt honour-bound to pull my socks up and clamber likewise. In Sri Lanka we saw orphan elephants at Pinnawella, not to mention the Buddhist shrine, the Temple of the Tooth. And we walked



A rickshaw driver in Singapore, the last port of call, takes a breather — unlike the author, one of the younger cruise participants, who felt honour-bound to pull her socks up on a hectic Indian Ocean voyage



Elephants were on the itinerary, at Pinnawella in Sri Lanka

around the Botanic Gardens at Peradeniya, buying authentic spices in plastic packets at the gates.

It was marvellous and all that, but also oh-so-weird to find ourselves in Sri Lanka, because it was still Christmas, even if it did not feel like it. Back at home, I knew I would have been queuing in Boots to buy last-minute Wallace and Gromit novelty gifts. Buying Wallace and Gromit stuff is what Christmas is all about, surely. A nice bout of flu usually comes into it, as well.

So we had a lot of mental adjusting to do. However, once Sri Lanka was dealt with, at least we could settle down to three days at sea, travelling east towards Malaysia and getting the hang of life on board. The *Minerva* is a lovely ship, decorated to resemble a country-house hotel — all table lamps and chess boards, watercolours, rugs and books. At 128 metres in length, with five decks, the ship is an agreeable size — not so large that you feel anonymous; not so small that it seems crowded or suffocating.

What helps, too, is that whereas other cruise ships enforce a seating plan for dinner, the *Minerva* does not. It allows you to choose between an informal café and a rather plush dining room, and more or less ensures that you sit with different companions every time. This way, my boyfriend and I met several amusing individuals, but also (it must be said) an astonishing number of identically constituted couples in which the dull husband was an antisocial retired civil engineer and the mousey wife had been driven to seek consolation of a sadly limited kind, in jewellery.

Everyone on cruises talks about either jewellery or the other cruises they have been on. That's just the way it is.

to tell us endlessly about the differences from the last one. "The Greek yoghurt on the old ship used to be marvellous," they said. Also, "This yoghurt simply isn't the same any more."

"Really?" we replied at first, with interested smiles. But "Oh, do shut up about the yoghurt," was what we wanted to say by the end. "Get a life. Have a slice of toast, for God's sake."

Oh, those yoghurt botes. Don't remind me. Still, it was good to hear the opinion of the professional cruisers. These are people who know how to behave gracefully, who lap up lectures, but who are also brutally critical if service lapses or excursions disappoint. Luckily only one of the lecturers was dreary (poor chap), but the others were excellent. Dame Judi and family were a big success on Boxing Night; the dance band and the quartet of student singers from the Guildhall were much admired; and if it had not rained on our Christmas Day barbecue, we'd have been in heaven. Admittedly, I heard a woman sneer that the lounge looked like a sofa warehouse. But I noticed she was wearing a quite horrendous home-made frock, so I took no notice.

The shape of the cruise was its most unfortunate aspect. We began with big, tiring, hot bustle in Sri Lanka; then relaxed at sea doing nothing in air-conditioned libraries and lounges; then had a big, tiring bustle at the end visiting Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Even restored by three days of eating and relaxing, I still found the outings a struggle, so perhaps it is just a temperament thing — I am resistant to doing a country in a day, and I don't like the heat much, either.

The big question, however, is whether you should really holiday like this at Christmas, when your stamina is so low on the gauge that the little red light has come on. Going away for Christmas, you don't escape the associated stresses, you just pile them on early and then need more than ever to collapse. And the trouble with such a good and entertaining trip as a Swan Hellenic cruise is that it is designed to reward a degree of mental alertness. "Leave me to sleep for a hundred years" is not the right attitude to bring along.

No wonder those eager-beaver oldies with no work to do get a lot more out of it than everyone else.

FACT FILE

■ Lynne Truss travelled with Swan Hellenic 0071-800-2200.

■ The company has a 15-day Oriental Christmas cruise on the *Minerva* this year from Bangkok to Hong Kong.

■ The trip, leaving December 14 and returning December 28, includes three ports of call in Vietnam. Prices start at £3,200, rising to £6,195, to include scheduled flights, all meals, excursions, tips and lectures. Theatre, bridge and music are features of the voyage.



Minerva's sundeck

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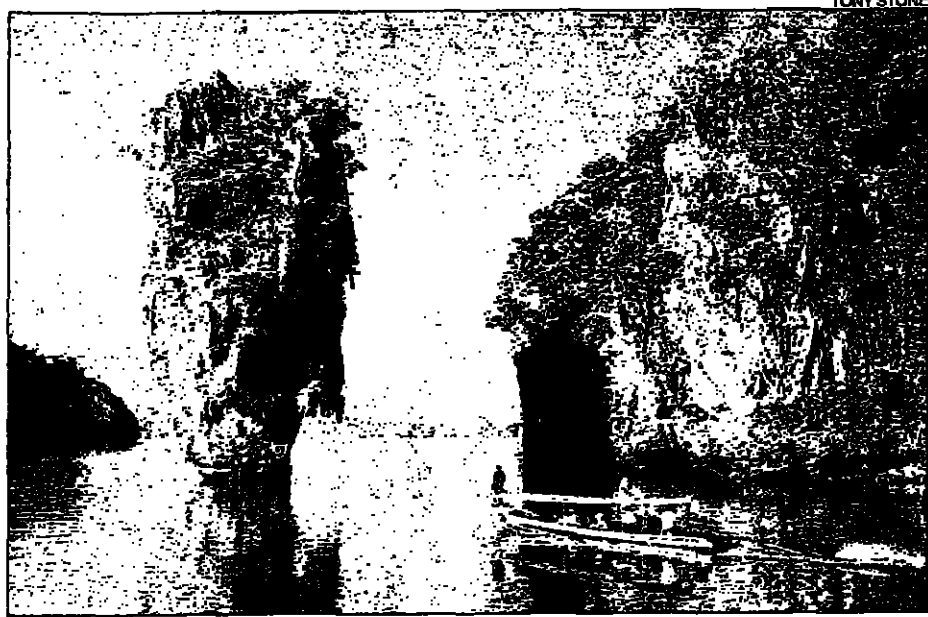
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JAMES BOND A WEEKEND GUIDE

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The Man with the Golden Gun: James Bond Island in Phang Nga Bay, Thailand

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There is our suave hero, tough on villains one minute, masterful in bed the next. Then there are the Bond girls — beautiful, numerous and preferably with innuendo-laden names such as Pussy Galore, Holly Goodhead and GoldenEye's priceless offering: Xenia Onatopp. Then there are the blatantly product-placing gadgets — from the underwater Lotus in *The Spy Who Loved Me*, which sold out Lotus Esprits for 18 months afterwards, to the laser-beamed Omega watch of *GoldenEye*, which has since featured in a million magazine advertisements.

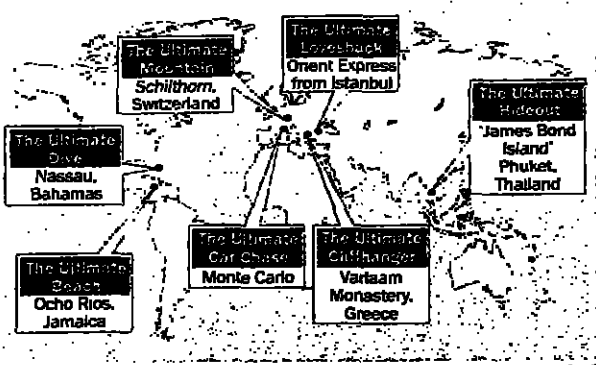
Finally, it is the wide-ranging locations that have put Bond films on the map. *Tomorrow Never Dies* was filmed in six countries. Some of the more jaw-dropping locations look as if they might be well off the beaten track but the pick of them are nearly all tourist destinations, as we reveal here.

ULTIMATE BEACH

Dr No: Laughing Waters Beach, near Ocho Rios, Jamaica

THE moment in *Dr No* when Ursula Andress as Honeychile Ryder does her Venus-rising-from-the-waves impression is branded into a million minds as the defining moment of the cult that is now James Bond: that combination of beautiful girl, stunning location and Bond wisecracking. The beach in question was Laughing Waters Beach, near Ocho Rios on the north coast of Jamaica. Its divine conjunction of talcum-powder white sand and brochure-perfect fringe of palm trees is crowned by a freshwater waterfall creating natural whirlpool baths for pining sunbathers.

This made it a popular



TOP SECRET FACT FILE

■ **For Your Eyes Only:** Valaam Monastery, Meteora Cliffs, Kalambaka, Greece. Filoxenia (01422 375999) will organise packages with accommodation at a three-star hotel in Kastraki, within walking distance of the monastery. A week's stay starts at £370.

■ **Dr No:** Laughing Waters Beach, near Ocho Rios, Jamaica. Caribbean Connection (01244 355300) has a week's half-board at Jamaica Inn, a five-star hotel in Ocho Rios, for £1,250, based on two sharing. Unjet (0990 336 336) has a week's self-catering at a three-star hotel in Ocho Rios for £590. Laughing Waters Beach is a ten-minute walk away.



Latter-day heroes can test their skills at Engelberg in Switzerland

■ **On Her Majesty's Secret Service:** Schilthorn, Mürren, Switzerland. Swiss Travel Service (01992 456123) offers a week's half-board at a three-star hotel for £475. Inghams (0181-780-4444) has a week's half-board at the Edelweiss hotel for £344.

choice for the first of many times that James Bond was to get out his bucket and spade and get sand between his toes. Seeing it from the sea is apparently the best viewpoint for Laughing Waters Beach — lucky, that, since it is now government-owned and visits

require special permission. The added bonus is that from the sea you can ignore (because it is out of sight) the hydro-electric power station that now profits from the waterfall.

Landbound visitors have to satisfy themselves with James Bond beach eastwards along the coast. This popular area, owned as part of the GoldenEye estate by the Island Outpost resort and especially popular with cruise-ship daytrippers, is half a mile closer to Oracabessa than Ian Fleming's beachfront house, after which the film *GoldenEye* was named. The house is owned by Chris Blackwell of Island Records but is available for rent (from a mere \$21,000 a week) through Island Outpost (0800 647900), as are a number of cheaper properties in Jamaica.

ULTIMATE CLIFFHANGER

■ **For Your Eyes Only:** Varlaam Monastery, Meteora cliffs, Kalambaka, central Greece. AROUND AD 985, when the first hermit saw the 60 or so towering, isolated sandstone columns that make up the region of Meteora (from the Greek for "middle of the air"), the fact that he did not have any of Q's gadgets did not stop him clambering 300m up one of the eroded stacks. Nor did it deter more than a dozen subsequent arrivals, who eventually transformed about 24 of these staggering natural rock stacks into airy monasteries.



JAMES BOND 007 CONTRE "Dr. NO"

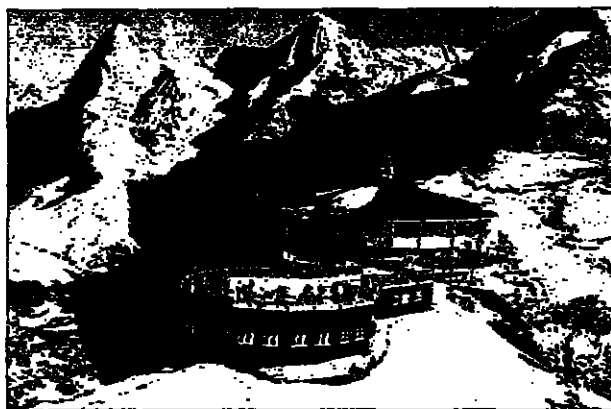
Dr No: Ursula Andress and Sean Connery on Laughing Waters Beach, on the north coast of Jamaica; it is now owned by the Government

A thousand years after the first ascent, James Bond turned up to sling his hook at one of the six still remaining: the Varlaam Monastery, in its "St Cyril's" guise as baddie Kristatos's den of trampolining vice. The monks took exception to the film crews and tried to spoil close-up shots by hanging out clothes lines loaded with their washing.

Despite this ecclesiastical interference, the rock-climbing scene alone is nearly ten minutes of nail-biting tension as a harpist Roger Moore positively ferries his brow, intercut with shots of his sturdily dangling from a rope not once but four times.

Nowadays, we ordinary visitors ascend the easy way — but still panting — up the spiral staircase carved into the rock in the 1920s. Built in 1518, the Varlaam Monastery is perhaps the richest of the Meteora sites in works of art, with some fine 16th-century frescoes and friezes, but none of the stained-glass, wood-paneled splendour of the stage-set interiors so well smashed up by Bond & Co.

Varlaam is closed on Fridays, and opening times on the other sites differ. An entire circuit of all six monasteries is about 20km and takes almost



The mountain eyrie at Schilthorn in Switzerland, left, a location for On Her Majesty's Secret Service, right

six hours by foot. The monastic dress code is strictly enforced: men must wear long trousers, women must wear below-the-knee skirts and both must cover their arms.

There are no hotels in Meteora but the nearby village of Kastraki has several good places, including the pleasantly eccentric Kastraki Hotel (0030-432 22 286). Hotel Meteora, a few miles away at Kalambaka, is exceptional but heavily booked (0030 432 22 307).

ULTIMATE CAR CHASE

GoldenEye: the Corniche road, near Monte Carlo. IN THE lexicon of car chases that pepper James Bond films, this one stands out as the most enjoyable to watch. The competitive chemistry between Xenia Onatopp (yes, she of the nutcracker thighs) and James Bond, even while he is relaxed, are delicious contrasts to the tyre-squealing, zig-zagging, drop-dead gorgeous mountain scenery through which they are racing.



A car-climbing scene from 'You Only Live Twice'

Even in a Ford Cortina you would feel like a rally driver along these curves but if your fancy is to do a James Bond, you can rent a Ferrari at Monte-Carlo Limousine (0037 792 05 66 00). But perhaps you should learn how to drive appropriately first. Tim Sugden Motorsport, near Leeds (0113 252 5145), offers a selection of James Bond Action Days: learn how to slide, spin and crash cars or

the skills of evasive driving, or throw in some gun-shooting, speedboating or helicopter role-play as well — then take home the video to show your family that you, too, can behave like 007. Aimed at their usual corporate clients, group-based prices start from £150 per person. Or call the RAC Motor Sports Association (01753 681736) for the nearest driving courses.

ULTIMATE LOVE SHACK

From Russia With Love: the Orient Express from Istanbul. WITH A Lektor decoding device under one arm and Tatiana, a seduced Smersh agent, under the other, Bond uses the Orient Express to leave Istanbul for London. Along the way he had a vicious in-carriage fight with Robert Shaw's ruthless killer and a couple more love scenes with Tatiana, which confirmed his reputation as the screen's most polished lover and the reputation of the Orient Express as one of the world's most romantic trains.

Next year, Bond's route from (and to) Istanbul will be relaunched, taking the train, for the first time since 1962, in the original luxury and on its original 1883 route through Romania and Hungary. It



was this route that inspired the train's reputation for mystery, romance, murder and intrigue. And this, plus the inspiration of a luxury train crossing six frontiers, resulted in those Agatha Christie films, 19 books and one piece of sheet music. With its reintroduction to Istanbul — the Byzantine spirit at its best here — the romantic legacy of James Bond rides again on the

Orient Express. A return trip from Paris can be yours for £2,785 (0171-805 5100).

ULTIMATE MOUNTAIN

On Her Majesty's Secret Service: Schilthorn, Mürren, Switzerland. LOVE OR hate George Lazenby as the ill-omened first successor to Sean Connery, Continued on page 2

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JAMES BOND: A WEEKEND GUIDE

Spy who loved London

York Membery maps out the agent's favourite haunts and locations

Has there ever been a jetsetting secret agent like James Bond? In his first film, *Dr No*, he headed for the Caribbean. In *From Russia With Love*, he visited just about everywhere but the USSR. And in *GoldenEye* he touched down in Monte Carlo, the former Soviet Union and the Caribbean — again.

Yet as soon as he has thwarted another madman bent on world domination — and seduced the obligatory blonde — he returns to London.

Any tour of London in 007's footsteps has to start in Chelsea, the secret agent's spiritual home — and incidentally home to his creator, Ian Fleming. The former Reuters journalist and naval intelligence officer put the finishing touches to the first 007 novel, *Casino Royale* — "the thriller to end all thrillers" that he set out to write in 1952 — at Carlyle Mansions, with its glorious views of the River Thames, in Cheyne Walk.

The suave spy himself "lived in a comfortable ground-floor flat in a converted Regency house in a square off the King's Road", according to Fleming, who adds: "There were the plane trees which his 1930 four-and-a-half litre supercharged Bentley coupe, which he kept expertly tuned so he could do a hundred when he wanted to." Nor in today's Chelsea, though, that's for sure.

But which square? The mystery has had Bond buffs racking their brains for years but most now agree that Markham Square, a leafy enclave off the King's Road lined by Georgian-style terraces, about ten minutes walk from Carlyle Mansions, is the likely real-life model for 007's fictional residence.

Continue to Sloane Square, and take the Underground two stops east to Pimlico. Just around the corner is Vauxhall Bridge, which offers a superb view of M16's striking £150-million sandstone and green glass headquarters south of the Thames. The Terry Farrell-designed structure is where Pierce Brosnan's Bond was branded "a sexist, misogynist dinosaur" by Judi Dench's M in *GoldenEye*.

Cross the bridge and, if you're feeling particularly plucky, press the intercom and ask whether the building is indeed M16's headquarters. Don't be surprised, though, if your inquiry is met by a frosty silence. Though one look at the building, which has more cameras on its walls than a Hollywood studio, should tell you this ain't no ordinary office block.

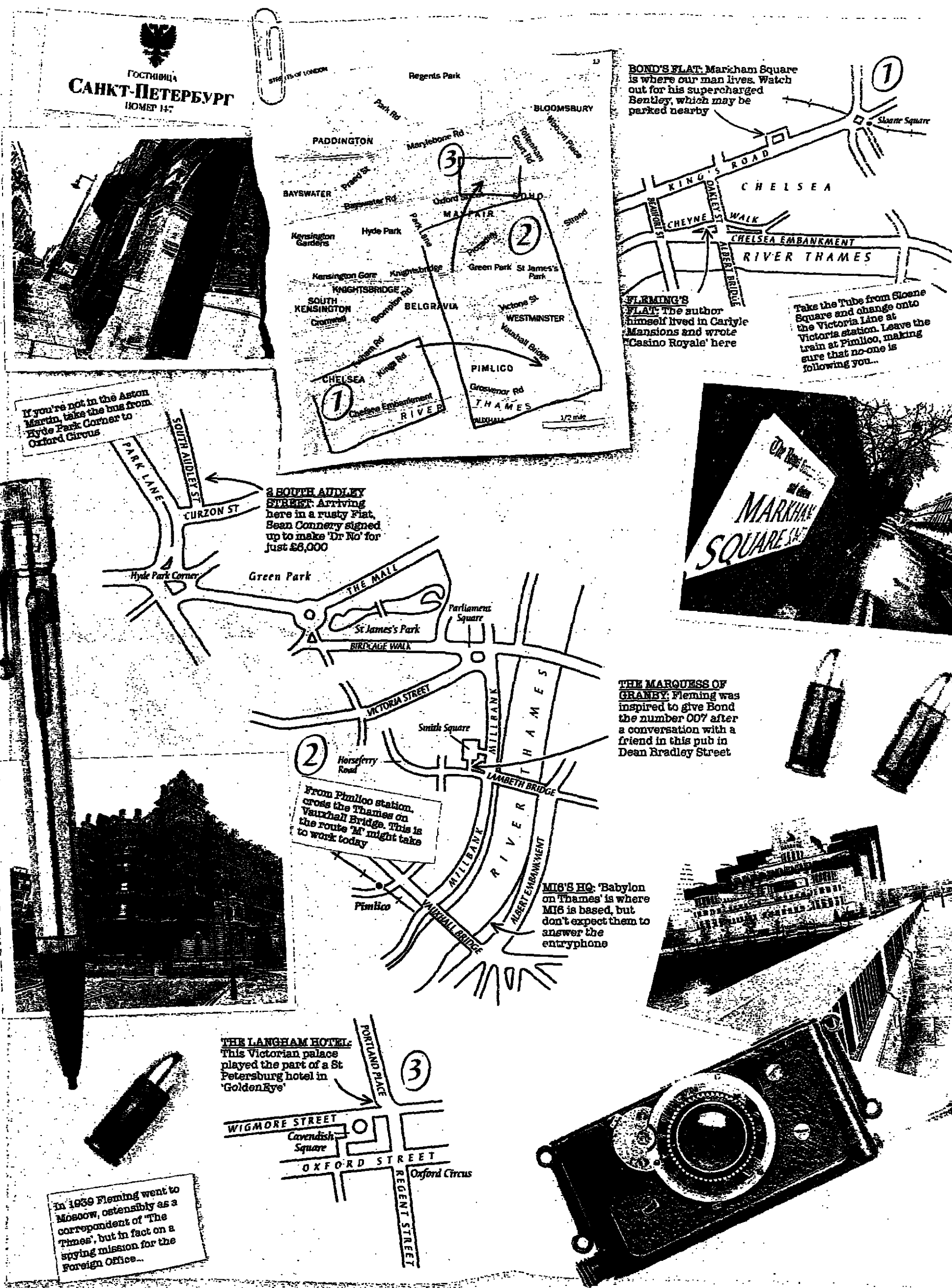
Walk along the Albert Embankment to Lambeth Bridge and make for Dean Bradley Street — on its north side, midway between Smith Square and Horseferry Road. Here you will find the Marquis of Granby, the public house where Bond's 007 code number was dreamt up — inspired by a chance conversation between Fleming and a drinking partner who had been given the number DMZ 7 when he was recruited into the Bevin Boys in the war. Outside the hostelry is a sign boasting that it serves "the perfect G&NB" — but shouldn't it be bragging about its vodka martini?

The West End yields a further Bond link: head up Millbank to Parliament Square, cut through St James's Park and Green Park to Hyde Park Corner, walk down Curzon Street and turn left into South Audley Street. In 1961, Sean Connery, then a struggling Scottish actor, pulled up outside the offices of Eon Productions, at 2 South Audley St, in a rusty little Fiat and signed up to make *Dr No* for a paltry £6,000 — nowadays not enough to buy a Fiat, let alone an Aston Martin.

Finally, take a bus from Hyde Park Corner to Oxford Circus. A few minutes walk north is the elegant Langham Hotel, dating back to 1865. Opened by the Prince of Wales and once the height of Victorian chic, it doubled up for a St Petersburg hotel in *GoldenEye* — the producers simply replacing the Union Jack, Stars and Stripes and European Union flags with a Russian Federation standard.

If the next 007 film, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, does anywhere near as well as *GoldenEye*, Bond's London could soon become as big a hit with tourists as Sherlock Holmes's London. Even if he remains the spy world's leading jetsetter.

© Pierce Brosnan: The Biography, by York Membery, is published by Virgin, at £5.99



Pictures by Gill Allen. Hand-held KGB surveillance camera courtesy of H. Keith Melton, author of *The Ultimate Spy Book*, published by Dorling Kindersley, £16.99. Propelling pencil pistol courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

Continued from page 25
(apparently, Diana Rigg used to eat garlic before her love scenes with Lazenby). James Bond's ski scenes in this film set the tone for the ski bonanzas in *The Spy Who Loved Me* and *A View to a Kill*.

Most dramatic of all was the moonlight flit from the mountain eyrie of Blofeld (played by Telly Savalas) at Schiltbhorn, a year after it was built as a real-life summit-house in 1967. Blessed with a panorama of more than 200 mountain peaks, a giddy hour-long cable-car ride (from the bottom of the valley) and a summit of nearly 3,000m which towers over any cloud on a foggy day, the Schiltbhorn was the perfect hangout for any megalomaniac bent on world domination.

Nowadays, with the imitation blood trails washed away, the fake bodies left in Bond's wake resurrected and the helicopter landing pad transformed into a sun terrace, the Schiltbhorn is a 360-degree revolving panoramic restaurant catering for more than 400 skiers in the winter and vista-seeking hikers in the summer.

Visitors come up from Interlaken, the mountain village of Gimmelwald or the car-free ski resort of Mürren. On bad-weather days, a ten-minute video — scenes from the film — revives memories of James Bond's adventures on this particular mountain; or why not just pack away a Martini or three in the James Bond Bar?

WHERE DO I START?

The cars, the films, the actors: they're all detailed on <http://pages.prodigy.com/bond/movies.html> while <http://shiftcontrol.com/archive/special/bond/plug-bondfiles.html> is a British-written brief summary of the leading actors and best bits of all the Bond films. <http://www.tomorrowneverdies.com> is the homepage of the upcoming Bond, with pictures and news bulletins.

KER-CHING! THE BEST DEAL

Shop at <http://www.viamail.com/hollywoodnet/bond.html> for T-shirts, mugs and caps on the largest movie merchandise site on the Web. <http://www.ngmusa.com/bond/home.html> is the official James Bond homepage: scorned by true Bondophiles (beware the daily quote takes five to ten minutes to download) but packed with merchandising: like the CD-Rom "The Ultimate James Bond. An Interactive Dossier." Those with expanding wallets can visit <http://www.jetsetonthenet.com/main/html/introduction.html> for Ferraris, high-tech goodies and the chance to rent your own Bahamian island.

ULTIMATE DIVE

Thunderball: the underwater fight scene: the "Bond wreck" at the western end of the Clifton Pier, Nassau, the Bahamas

OUT OF the five James Bond movies filmed in this "Underwater Hollywood" corner of the Bahamas (the first ever deep-sea film, the original *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, was filmed here), it is the underwater fight sequence in *Thunderball* that has fans reaching for their respirators every time.

To film these and the other underwater scenes took four months and involved the intricate building of a fiberglass and scaffolding life-size model of a Vulcan bomber plane. Thirty years later, most of the fiberglass has gone but the plane, with its landing gear and rubber tyres miraculously intact, is now a colourful riot of sea fans, soft sponges and corals, peopled by angel fish, grouper and other tropical sea creatures.

With the remake of *Thunderball* — *Never Say Never Again* — the Bond team, including the diving veteran

Sean Connery (Roger Moore never even turned up for the scuba scenes filmed here for *For Your Eyes Only*), sank another wreck, that of the *Tears of Allah* boat. These coral-infested relics make up the "Bond wreck" — a popular diving site at Clifton Pier, west of Nassau, on the tax-free, gambler-friendly island of New Providence. This trip is offered by companies such as Stuart's Cove (001 242 362 4171) as part of a two-dive package. For \$65, you get to be James Bond, then go further afield to "The Wall", where the shallow seabed,

barely 15m deep, suddenly falls away to an abyss of 2,000m. Now that sounds considerably scarier than a few underwater hoodlums giving our James a bit of a hard time.

ULTIMATE HIDEOUT

The Man with the Golden Gun: James Bond Island, Phang Nga Bay, Phuket, Thailand. HUGE limestone cliffs and weird rock formations jut out of a turquoise sea as Christopher Lee tries to outwit James Bond in this

most surreal and spectacular of all the Bond film locations.

Huge solar panels leap out of the towering island opposite and speedboats and planes slalom in and out of the countless rocky steeples in Phang Nga Bay, near Phuket in Thailand. It is a scenario re-enacted in the forthcoming *Tomorrow Never Dies* as Pierce Brosnan and sidekick race to find baddie Carver's Stealth boat.

The reality is just as impressive, although James Bond Island (as the locals affectionately call it) is rather smaller than you imagine from the scale that is presented in *The Man With the Golden Gun*. Nevertheless, the sheer number of dramatically proportioned islands is staggering. All are precipitous — although only a few have the pearl-dust sandy beaches of James Bond Island — and all are topped by an untidy green fringe of clinging tropical vegetation.

And, for all its imagined remoteness, the bay is a mere hop and a skip from mainstream tourist haunt Phuket, just up the coast. Some might prefer the backpacker simplicity of staying at the Muslim fishing village of Kopanyi, attached to one of the Phang Nga Islands.

Everything is on stilts, even the football pitch: if a ball is kicked over the goal line, the goalie has to dive into the sea to retrieve it...

WEBWORLD: JAMES BOND



Greatest Fan's site, Kimberley Last's, and has links to the Ultimate Collection of Fan Pages, like Club James Bond.

MUGGING-UP
With over 200,000 sites, the Internet really is your virtual oyster for James Bond fans. <http://www.concentric.net/Volante/> is a good place to start, with comprehensive links to all things 007-ish. <http://www.moviehq.com/reviews/index.htm> contains short reviews: start here at *Diamonds Are Forever*, then link through to the entire lexicon. The randomly named <http://poly.srv.net/bunacan/007info.html> is a smorgasbord of Bondiana, including a card game.

"WELL I NEVER"

At <http://www.universaleports.net/> find out that Burt Reynolds could have been... and more. Be shaken, not stirred by Ian Fleming's Martini recipe at <http://www.axionet.com/key/recipe4.html>

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SKI WEEKEND: FESTIVE RESORTS



Village square in Whistler, British Columbia, where the glacier slopes will definitely be white for the holiday season. Spend a luxury Christmas week here followed by the new year week in Hawaii for a £2,565 per person

We all dream of a white Christmas



Downhill all the way: Ste-Foy, near Val d'Isère, is a good place to learn to ski off-piste

GETTING away over the jolly season poses sobering problems, and careful planning is necessary if your skiing holiday is to go off like a Christmas cracker. This winter is difficult because the phenomenal boom in the skiing market is already exhausting capacity. Many firms report bookings running 100 to 500 per cent ahead of last year. There is little accommodation left for the new year week, although Christmas is selling a bit more slowly.



DOUG SAGER

This year, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve and the morning after all fall outside the package turn-over days of Saturday and Sunday, which means nobody will be forced to travel on the most important days of the holiday season. Still, the dream of a white Christmas means that almost every resort in the Alps and America will be crammed to the rafters. At no other time of the year are pistes more crowded. The dilemma for keen skiers is where — at any price and any distance — snow quality can be guaranteed and

queuing will be at a minimum. Families with small children, singles on tight schedules and couples looking for a romantic hideaway away from the crowds all face problems finding a holiday tailored to their needs.

In recent years, a number of holiday firms and so-called independent consultants have made a speciality of advising those who do not fit into the typical package ski holiday.

I faxed 20 such firms requesting suggestions for snowboarders, for families, for escapists and for those for whom money is no object. Some firms responded within minutes, notably Snow Line, Ski Weekend and Erna Low.

Perhaps an indication of just how good business is this season, is that five of the better known specialists had not bothered to respond within a week.

From the firms which submitted specific offers, I have chosen the most unusual and interesting. All were available at the time of going to press.



That time of year again: Father Christmas takes to the slopes with some young fans



Absolutely guaranteed to be frozen white: Whistler

chalets and Burton boots, boards and bindings all available for test. Chalet Snowboard is the only choice (40 per cent of guests are aged over 30). Chalet Snowboard (01235-767 575) has accommodation in Morzine and Avoriaz, December 20-27, at £425 including flights and half-board.

Romantic couples looking to hide away from the pistes in luxury are in luck. Tailor-made specialist Momentum Travel has found a four-star hotel — indoor pool, sauna and each room furnished with antiques — in Cogné, a village on the Saint-Orso snowfields below Italy's Gran Paradiso national park. It is only two hours from Geneva or Turin and the hotel owner will pick you up in his 1920s limousine. Downhill skiing is limited but the area is a cross-country paradise. Momentum (0171-371 9111) quotes a seven-day package including flights, car hire and half-board for £899 per person.

Learning to ski off piste could not be less of a strain, staying at what I regard as the loveliest chalet in the Alps, and being taught by two in-house guides from the famous Zimmer brothers' Top Ski centre. Ste-Foy is near Val d'Isère, but the hamlet has huge and easy off-piste sectors unvisited by experts. Yellowstone chalet is a new residence featured this season by The Ski Company (0171-730 9600). Christmas week (December 21-28) is available at £1,687 per person including flights, meals, guides and Christmas dinner.

Single and looking to ski with somebody serious? The weekend and off-piste specialist Ski Weekend has put together Christmas and new year packages with the best skiing in the Alps. The last Swissair flights (2pm) on either December 24 or 31 have you in Chamonix two-and-a-half hours later. Four days of skiing follow: with an introduction to off-piste skiing by Chamonix master guide Roland Stieger preceding helicopter skiing, descents of colours like the Pas de Chevre or expeditions down the scenic Vallée Blanche, according to conditions and ability levels. Business-class return has you back in London on Monday.

evening (8.45pm). The Ski Weekend (01367-241 636) price for either programme is £659, including flights, half-board hotel accommodation and guiding.

EXOTIC AND EXCLUSIVE

FOR A twist on the white Christmas theme, Ski the American Dream proposes the guaranteed white glacier slopes of Whistler in Canada for Christmas, followed by the white sands of Hawaii for the new year. Though Ski the American Dream neglects to note it, there is snow skiing in Hawaii, although you have to climb a volcano first.

Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201) has availability for its December 20-January 5 package excluding meals, with seven nights at Chateau Whistler and nine at the Halekulani on Waikiki beach, all transfers and flights, at £2,565 per person.

Cowboy Christmas at your own private ranch outside Crested Butte, Colorado, includes horse riding and snowmobiling. The food and accommodation are at the top of the range but the ranch is strictly no smoking. Crested Butte's nearby skiing is good for all abilities, and lifts are half-price for Buckhorn guests. Ski Equipe (0161-440 0010) has availability for seven, ten and 14-day packages departing on December 20 or 27, from £1,095 to £1,595 per person for flights and some evening meals.

However, for me there is only one choice for the serious skier over the holiday period, and that is helicopter skiing in Canada. James Orris offering the ultimate powder playground: 1,000 square miles of wilderness to be shared by only one private group. Although not normally operating this early in the season, Crescent Spur in northern British Columbia will open its luxury lodge and fire up the helicopter for any select group of between eight and 14 skiers. James Orr (0171-580 7883) bases prices on a Sunday to Saturday package including meals and guiding and a minimum 60,000ft of skiing — at £1,680 per person but not including flights from Britain.

AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES

PERHAPS the simplest way to avoid expense and overcrowding is not to stay in a resort at all. Bourg-St-Maurice is a French market town with no frills but it does have a TGV railway station (a terminus for the Eurostar) and it lies in the heart of the Tarentaise, home to the Trois Vallées, La Plagne and Val d'Isère. For everyday skiing, the three ski areas of

Les Arcs can be reached directly from town within seven minutes via Bourg-St-Maurice's modern funicular. Erna Low (0171-584 2841) is offering the best budget deal I have found: a self-drive package with bed-and-breakfast accommodation at the English-run Petite Auberge, December 20-27, for £170 per person, ferry included.

For a more in-depth study of French rural life, and the Alpine cable car with the

shortest queues, Vaujany is an excellent family choice, both for the intermediate slopes just above the village and for its cable car, which rises directly into the extensive skiing of Alpe d'Huez. Ski Peak (01252-754941), the only British operator in Vaujany and highly rated for family values, has Christmas week (December 20-27) availability in its Chalet Rostaing at £553, including flights and half-board.

Ski Esprit is the firm which,

in my view, best puts parents on the piste with peace of mind, offering the most professional childcare, the best guarantees and non-smoking chalets. Morzine in the Portes du Soleil has toy trains which shuttle children to the lifts. Ski Esprit has money-back guarantees for its nursery services and for ski-school tuition. Chalet Catherine has a nursery in the chalet. Ski Esprit (01252-616 789) is offering children under 18 half-price and their own separate rooms when booking with parents, paying £489 for flights and

half-board during the week December 21-28. Young children have been known to refuse to go on Christmas skiing holidays, afraid they will miss Santa. That will not happen with the Christmas offer suggested by both Snow Line and Skiers Travel Bureau. Kids can visit the saint at home at "Santa's favourite ski resort": Levi in Lapland. Ice fishing, husky dog and reindeer safaris should help to keep everyone interested, and snow is guaranteed. Snow Line (01838-433 633)

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It's all a question of vertical drops

ALTHOUGH the Alps are still waiting for snow, American ski resorts open this weekend for Thanksgiving, traditionally the first big skiing vacation of the year. Doug Sager writes.

Vail Resorts has just announced that all ski passes purchased at Vail will cover five resorts. Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge and Keystone, all owned by Vail Resorts, were the four that were previously included. Now the separately owned Arapahoe Basin has been added to the ticket.

Aspen Skiing Company apparently retains its number one title in the United States, after a period of confusion between the various resort areas over which is the highest and longest.

Construction this season of a new drag lift into the Cirque area at Snowmass, one of four resorts owned by the Aspen Skiing Company, prompted the Aspen conglomerate to launch a public relations campaign boasting both the longest vertical



Go for it: snowboarding

drop — 4,406ft — and the highest, lift-served skiing terrain at 12,510ft.

Jackson Hole continues to advertise itself in press material as having the longest continuous vertical drop (4,139ft), but this claim is denied by Aspen Skiing Corporation. Big Sky in Montana has a longer vertical drop than Jackson Hole, at 4,180ft, but admits that this length cannot be skied

in one descent, an additional chairlift being required for the lowest portion of the pistes.

Earlier this week, Aspen Skiing Company informed me that it had "made a mistake" and was withdrawing its claim to the highest skiing. Breckenridge advertises skiing at 12,998ft. Loveland puts its top skiing at 13,010ft. And Arapahoe Basin claims skiing at 13,050ft.

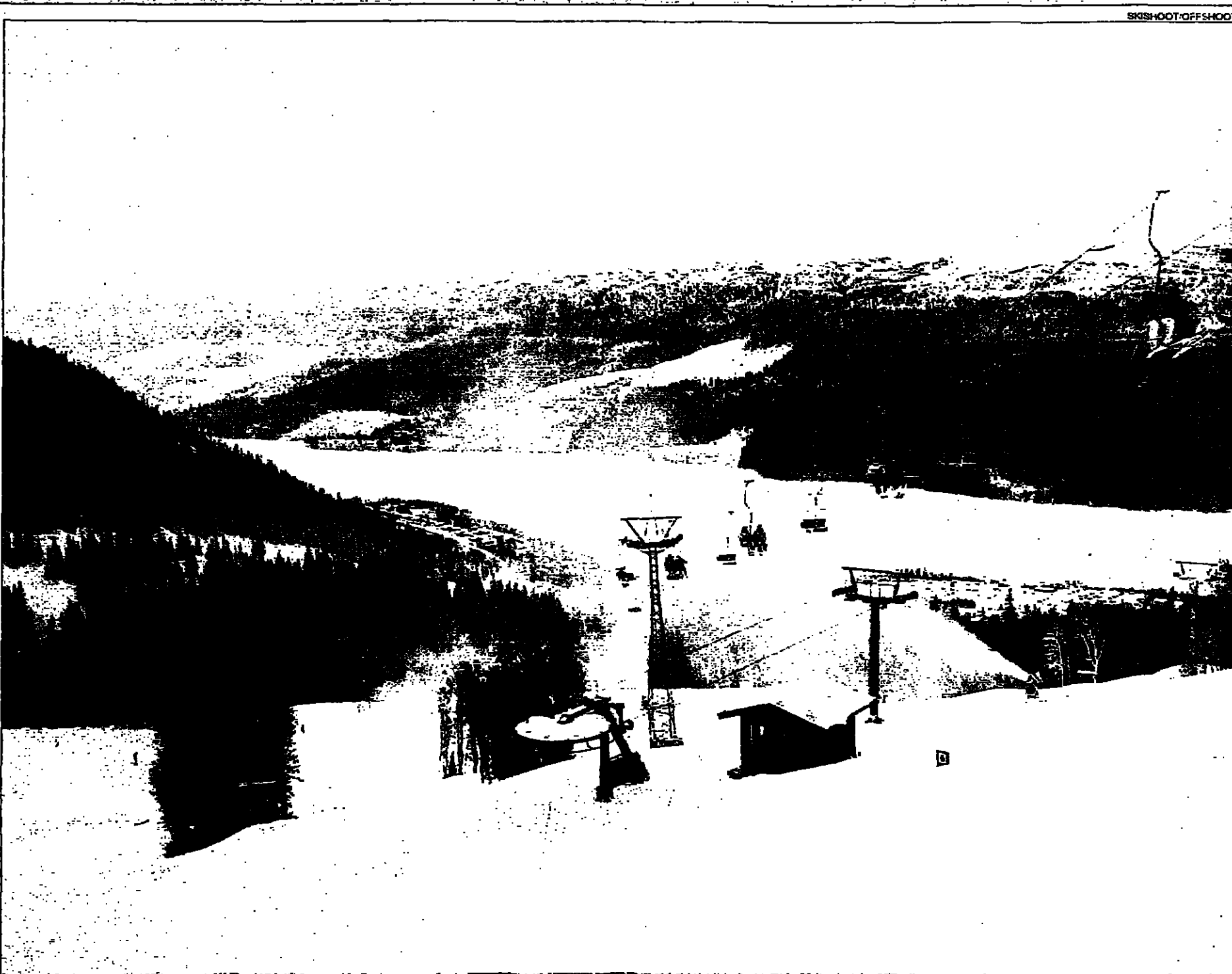
However, upon closer examination of piste maps it appears that all these Colorado resorts require hiking on foot beyond the lift systems to access these peak areas. Snowmass's Cirque lift will carry skiers all the way up to 12,510ft without walking, and this lift is scheduled to run at least 60 days during the season.

"So, I guess that puts us back at the top after all, for highest lift-served skiing. At least, I think so," was the final word on the subject from the Aspen Skiing Company.

WORLD COVER

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SKI WEEKEND: TAKING THE CHILDREN



Swedes tend to be more chunkily wrapped than Alpine skiers (above left), and while T-bars predominate on the slopes, redeeming features include uncrowded runs and superb views

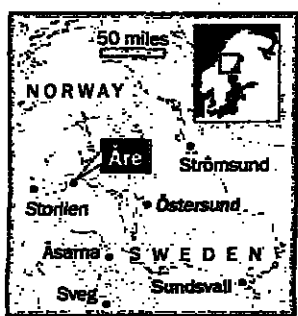
Sweden's well-kept secret

George Brock and his family warm to the friendly, uncrowded, albeit cold, resort of Are

I'd like to live here," said my 14-year-old son as we rested on our skis and gazed out towards Norway over glittering mountain peaks. Paddy Brock does not always pay this kind of compliment to holiday destinations. He has been to California, Hong Kong, the Mediterranean and all over Europe without ever having been heard to express a desire to settle in any one of those places.

But Paddy, in common with the rest of the family, loved Sweden. If you tell people that you are off to ski in Sweden, they simply look puzzled and assume that you have muddled your Scandinavians and actually mean that you are going to Norway. Or they think you are going just to ski cross-country. But the mountain range which runs down Norway also stretches across the border here and there. Nestling self-effacingly halfway up Sweden are a cluster of downhill resorts barely known to British skiers.

The secret remains well-kept for obvious reasons: Swedish winter sports are reckoned to be cold, dark and



expensive. Two Swedish resorts occupy exactly four pages out of 387 in the current brochure from Crystal. One of only two big British tour operators who bother with the downhill skiing in Sweden. Direct charter flights to Östersund, the convenient airport, only begin this year; we had to change planes in Stockholm.

You cannot take as cheap a skiing holiday in Sweden as you can in the French Alps. I think that Sweden's extra advantages outweigh the cost but you should assume, as a rule of thumb, that Swedish skiing will cost you 20 per cent more all round.

And the weather can be painfully cold. We went late in

the season but still experienced two days (out of six) when the wind cut the visibility to a few yards on all but a fraction of the mountain. You do not see many slinky ski suits on Swedish pistes; your fellow skiers dress for Arctic weather in awesomely chunky anoraks and woolly hats.

And your fellow skiers are almost all Swedes. After the Identikit facilities and decor of the multinational mass resorts in the Alps, the Swedish resort of Are never let us forget that we were in a distinctive country.

Our apartment-hotel was on the edge of a village. A handsome horse strolled and grazed in the snowy field behind the hotel. Small, well-wrapped schoolchildren skied to school past our back windows; their smaller brothers and sisters came by in push-chairs on skis.

So unaccustomed are they to foreign visitors in Are (pronounced "aura") that many signs carry no language but Swedish. It's not a problem: almost everybody speaks some English.

Courtesy comes as standard in rural Scandinavia. When

PADDY BROCK, 14

"ARE is quiet but brilliant: like a genius sitting at the back of a class without saying a word. It is uncrowded but not at all dead. The ski school was like the resort: small. They have good techniques for making one recognise and solve problems with one's skiing. When the weather is bad, it is impossible to see and hard on your face. The snow blows across the path of the T-bar lifts and no track is left to ski in. On one lift, one couple in four fell off — often taking people behind them down as they went. There are lots of other things to do: husky-sleighs, skidoos, reindeer sleighs and paragliding. The reindeer sleigh sounds more dangerous than paragliding."

snowboarders first appeared and threatened to disturb the calm, earnest discussions were held in each resort to defuse the threat of chaos on the slopes: snowboarders now have their own areas, and politically correct snowboarding is taught in the local schools.

The pistes available in Are would satisfy all but black-run skiers for a week. The runs are well looked after, long and uncrowded; the views into Norway are gorgeous. They have 70km of cross-country tracks.

To cap all this contentment, Sweden was revealed to me for the first time as a country of high-class cuisine. On a standard four-star hotel package, we ate meals each night which would cost £30 a head if served at a London brasserie. And during the day we were expertly taught by Tony Koning, the English-



I could live here: Paddy Brock, left and brother Ollie on a sleigh ride

born head of the local ski school.

People used to mainland European resorts or the United States will find things to irritate them. "If I could find the person who invented the T-bar drag lift, I'd shoot him," said Ollie as he dug himself and his skis out of the snow he had fallen into.

Are has only a handful of chair lifts; most are T-bars. To Swedes, most of whom have skied for years, this is no problem; to the less experienced, it is a pain. The ski school is so unused to inexperienced adults that complete beginners have to spend their first morning hanging around without getting on skis until after lunch. Ski school in Are operates in the early afternoon and that's that.

But these are minor quibbles, and the skiing is anyway only part of the picture. One afternoon we went to visit a herd of reindeer which graze near the wooden huts built by the once nomadic Sami herders. Close up, reindeer are

smaller and gentler than you would expect: less like deer and more like small cows with pale coats the colour of drinking chocolate.

The next afternoon we took a sleigh ride pulled by teams of ferociously energetic huskies. We shot out of the pine trees and swished across a frozen lake lit by a pale setting sun.

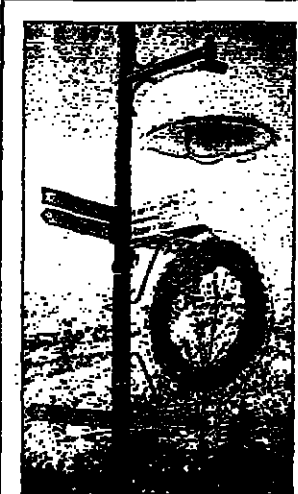
We fancied the advertised reindeer sleigh-ride as well but when I wanted to book, the mustard-keen man from Crystal Holidays looked a little queasy. "Er, I think the reindeer sleigh may be off," he said, explaining that a recent trip had been abandoned when the reindeer grew too obstreperous to control.

OLLIE BROCK, 12

"HUSKY dogs look nothing like I expected them to. They look like big furry dogs who eat ordinary diets: the sleigh-pullers in Sweden are small but eat enough to kill a normal dog. One realises how different Swedish skiing is compared to the average French resort when you look back from the top of the slope: empty. Or when you see a ski instructor answering his mobile phone on the T-bar lift, or while skiing down a slope. In Are, everyone speaks English and is friendly. I was skiing along one day and by mistake left my pole behind. Four snowboarders behind me all had a go at picking it up. The fourth succeeded and handed it to me!"

The only much-touted local attraction that none of us wanted to try was skiing at night. Are makes much of the many kilometres of downhill and cross-country pistes which are floodlit well into the evening. The locals claim that the lights shine so brightly on the mountainside that the national security agency in Washington once asked the Swedish government about the odd glow that was being picked up by the American spy satellites.

But the idea of skiing in the evening leaves me cold. Or at least it would have left me very cold indeed if I had ever abandoned the cosy warmth of our apartment.



Christmas cheer

FACT FILE

■ George Brock travelled with Crystal Holidays (0181-399 5144) to Are. Besides skiing packages for the adventurous in Slovenia, Georgia and Bulgaria, Crystal also operates to Sweden's largest ski area, Sälen. A seven-day stay in a four-bed apartment in the Hotel Renen costs £459 per person in high season. Hire of skis, sticks and boots adds £83 per skier; a six-day high season lift pass costs £105.

■ Are has 89 runs, totalling 82km. Despite being so far north, they use man-made snow on 20 of those pistes. There are 70km of cross-country tracks. The village of Are is 400m above sea level and the average temperature in February is -7C, in March -3.8C.

■ Are also offers husky sleigh rides, paragliding on the frozen lake at the foot of the mountain, visits to a huge frozen waterfall, snow scooters, go-kart racing on studded tyres, ice climbing and night skiing. Are's website is www.arefall.se

■ Website: www.crystalholidays.co.uk

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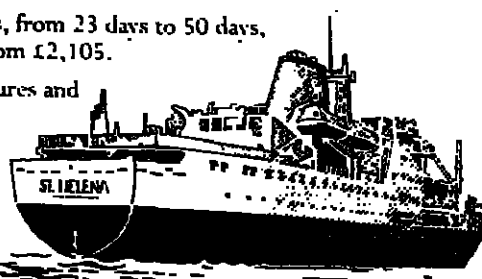
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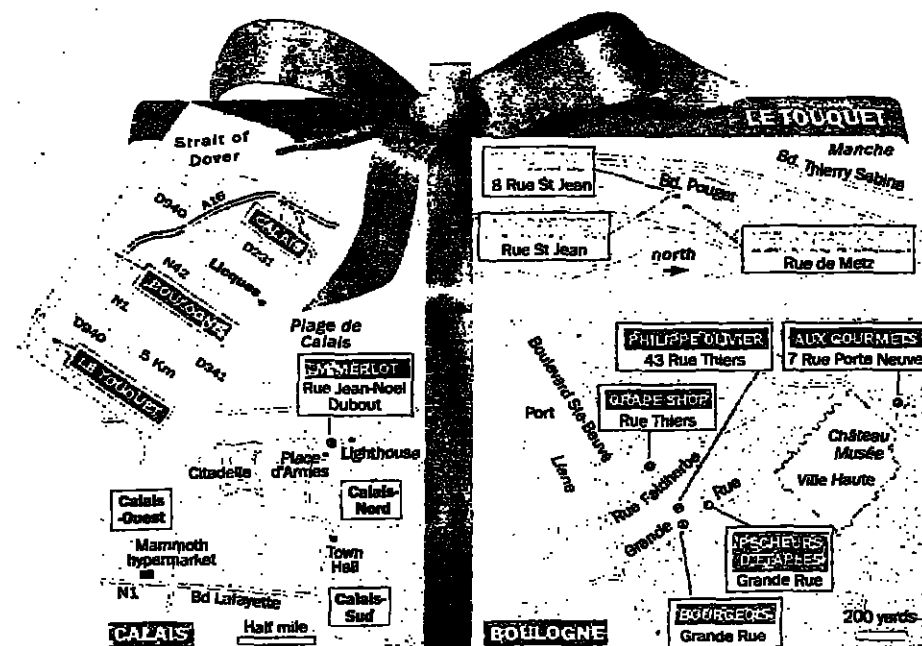
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The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, is Tom Whitelaw, of Bearsden in Scotland

Shopping in France is cheaper, the selection is better and goods even come gift-wrapped, says Robin Young

It's time for that counter attack



TRY SOMETHING different this year: all you need is stamina and determination to brave Channel gales, booze-cruise companions and French shopping queues. The rewards are rich — you will be able to treat family and friends to delicacies you might never afford, or in some cases be able to obtain, in Britain. And in France shop assistants will happily gift-wrap goods free of charge.

My big idea, first put into practice last year, was to take advantage of rock-bottom ferry fares and stock up with beer, wines and spirits and just about anything else appropriate. It could not have worked better and friends and acquaintances were simply awestruck by the splendour of our Christmas arrangements.

The operation is profitable because all your alcohol will be bought at duty-free or French (low duty) prices. Discounts on perfumes, tobacco, beauty products, cameras and watches come as an optional bonus. But the real prize is the shopping that is available in and around Calais and Boulogne. I travelled alone with a shop-till-you-drop attitude. Having other family members along can help to divide the labour, but will involve discussions about what and where to buy. Leading supermarkets and hypermarkets in France open on only the last three Sundays before Christmas, and all specialist food shops are likely to be closed on Monday mornings.



Best in the Channel ports: the Charcuterie Bourgeois, 1 Grande Rue in Boulogne, is full of mouthwatering delicacies for a Christmas Eve feast

CATCH AN early ferry. The time saved in loading and unloading procedures is valuable, bearing in mind that however early you set out it is already an hour later in France because of the time difference.

Leaving home in central London at 6am, I was in Calais on December 23 last year just before 10am local time. I drove straight to my favourite baker, M Merlot, in his modest shop at 10 Rue Jean-Noël Dubout, off the northeastern corner of Place d'Armes at the coastal (northern) end of town.

There is no point in buying French baguettes so early in the day. They are intended to keep only a few hours. Instead I bought large, unsliced *pains de campagne* (country loaves), *pains aux olives* (bread with olives) and *pains aux noix* (walnut bread). From good bakers these more durable French loaves will last up to a week.

M Merlot's cakes and pastries were so tempting that I bought some of them, too, before heading the few miles inland from Calais to Liéges.

Liéges is to poultry in France rather as Norfolk is to turkeys in Britain. The little town has an annual turkey festival (this year on December 13-14) and a reputation for high-quality chickens, ducks and geese. I had ordered a capon (something we have not

been allowed to buy in England since 1973) in advance by ringing Liéges Volailles on 3-21 35 80 03. To find the abattoir, turn right just before entering the town. The low-slung white building on the rise on the right-hand side is the one you want. Collecting and paying for my bird took only minutes.

From Liéges I headed to the vast Cité Europe shopping mall outside Calais (junctions 12 or 14 off the A16). The hypermarket here is a Carrefour (not my favourite) so I preferred to park at the lower level close to the Porte de Belge, which provides quick access to the Cité's gastronomic shops. There is another excellent baker here — actu-

ally the village baker from nearby Wierre Effroy, who had the good sense to open within the shopping centre. His bread from wood-fired ovens will not disappoint, and his neighbours include Tesco and Victoria Wine. The most catholic wine selections in the French Channel ports are available from the British wine retailers, who also include Sainsbury's linked to the Auchan (formerly Mammoth) hypermarket off the N1 west of Calais and the Grape Shop in Rue Thiers, Boulogne.

A quick whisk of best bargains from Tesco and Vic Wine saw me back on the motorway in less than half an hour, now with a bootful of booze alongside my fruit and veg. I had an untroubled 20-minute drive to Boulogne, where I bought preserves, spices and other delicacies from the Hédland range at Aux Gourmets, 7 Rue Porte Neuve, just outside the gates of the old town, and rewarded myself with lunch at Pêcheurs d'Étapes in the Grande Rue (3-21 30 29 29), one of several town-centre restaurants capable of providing a speedy feast.

I stopped at the fish counter on the way out to buy a punnet of oysters packed in wet seaweed. They will keep up to five days if the weather is cold enough, and I gave mine extra protection by packing them into one of the cold boxes with freezer blocks I had brought with me.

A FEW doors down the street, at No 1 Grande Rue, is the Bourgeois charcuterie shop, the best in the Channel ports (3-21 31 57, phone and fax). Here I bought a Christmas Eve feast of *choucroute garnie* (pickled cabbage with five sorts of sausages and two cooked meats), as gargantuan as *gargantua* (Christmas Eve feast), Christmas breakfasts of *andouillettes* (tripe sausages), *boudins noirs* and *boudins blancs* (black puddings) and poultry and veal sausages) and a generous tub full of the Christmas speciality *rillettes d'oie* (a kind of mashed goose). Other options this year will include *cassoulet* (stew of pork, poultry and beans), and *petit salé aux lentilles* (salt pork with lentils).

The next stop was essential for cheese-lovers, round the corner at No 43 Rue Thiers at the Fromagerie de Philippe Olivier (3-21 31 94 74, fax 3-21 30 76 57). By prior arrangement M Laurent, chef of the Relais de la Brocante at Wimille (3-21 83 19 31, fax 3-21 87 29 71), had left a meticulously prepared foie gras for collection here. (He was closed on December 23 last year.) He, or other local chefs, may still entertain a limited number of similar orders this year — or you can buy foie gras direct from producers in the immediate hinterland of Boulogne.

As for cheese, the Olivier shop staff are helpful about choosing a good selection and having them in the right state of readiness for consumption a stated number of days ahead. The Christmas cheese par excellence in France is the unctuously creamy Vacherin de Mont d'Or, so runny that it has to be eaten with a spoon and not the easiest to have in the peak of condition just

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when required. I also bought Roquefort, Munster, Reblochon, Camembert, Pont l'Évêque and a magnificently fruity Belfort — but there are more than 200 cheeses in the shop to choose from.

There is also butter with sea salt, whole milk yoghurts, *tarte aux maroilles* (local cheese tart), *crème fraîche* and walnut bread.

CHANNEL OFFERS

HOVERCRAFT (0990 240241) offers a day-trip to Boulogne at £18 for two people. The deal includes rail travel from a choice of 15 stations in London and the Southeast to Folkestone, and then onwards to Boulogne by Hovercraft. The company also has 15 foot-passenger fares available on Dover-Calais and Folkestone-Boulogne. A car and five passengers by SuperCat on Folkestone-Boulogne costs £25 (£35 on Saturdays and bookings on day of travel; Hovercraft fares on Dover-Calais, £29 (£39 Saturdays and bookings on day of travel). Valid until December 31.

Daytrips for £10 are also available when taking the 7am SuperCat departure from Dover on Friday or Saturday. These are valid for a car and five passengers.

STENA LINE (0990 707070): Day-trippers on foot can travel Dover-Calais and Newhaven-Dieppe for £2: a car costs £15 and £2 per passenger. A £10 supplement per car applies on Saturdays with a £1 supplement for foot passengers. This is valid until December 31.

SEAFRANCE (0990 717171): Day-trip fares to Calais cost £1 for foot passengers every day. A car and driver costs £10 (which becomes £20 on Saturdays), extra passengers are charged £1 each. This is valid until December 31.

One night's B&B in Calais costs £39 (£49 on Saturdays) for two sharing a twin or double room, including ferry crossing from Dover. Valid until December 22.

P&O EUROPEAN FERRIES (0990 980980): Day-trip fares Dover-Calais: £2 for foot passengers, £25 for a car and up to nine people (£35 on Saturdays). A two-day fare costs £29 for a car and five passengers (with a £10 supplement applicable on Saturdays). You can book and pay 24 hours in advance. This is valid until December 31.

LE SHUTTLE (0990 355335): Day-trips, booked 24 hours in advance, available from Sunday to Friday for £29 for a car and all occupants (£39 on Saturdays). Until December 31, one night's B&B in Calais or St Omer is £35 per person, including Channel Tunnel travel (travel after midnight, return before 4pm the following day, book 24 hours in advance).

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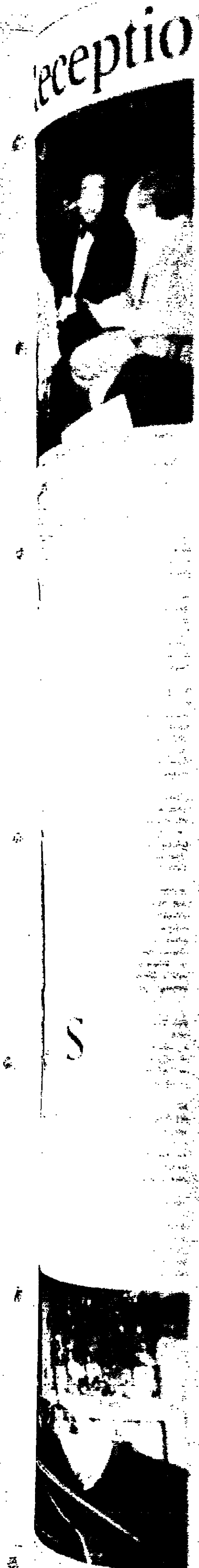
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Reception? There's a corpse in my bath



Would-be sleuths compare notes and collect clues

Ivo Tennant dusts off his deerstalker as he joins the hunt for the killer on a murder mystery weekend

My invitation was, well, rather different. It came from the St Giles Music Appreciation Society to attend its annual convention at a hotel near Oxford to elect a new president.

In the event, far from discussing the merits of great concertos, the guests were to spend the entire weekend investigating an even more taxing matter: a murder.

This occurred in the bath and, what was more, during dinner. It was not altogether a damned inconvenience.

There was a suspicion of ketchup about the blood, and the sleuth who materialised to try to solve the crime was more Hercule Poirot than a modern police chief-inspector.

The plot had been devised for a murder mystery weekend to tax the intellects of guests from far afield who were more interested in testing their skills of deduction than loafing around a swimming pool.

The idea behind these weekends is that the guests arrive at the hotel in time for dinner on Friday. At some point that evening a corpse is discovered. Then the fun begins.

The guests examine the scene and then spend much of that evening and the following day looking for clues.

Other actors appear and help the development of the plot, structured so that it cannot be solved before Sunday: a likely suspect may even be bumped off on Saturday evening.

The identity of the murderer will be revealed before Sunday lunch and with any luck — and ingenuity — it will have been guessed before then, by a guest or guests able to put together the pieces of the puzzle.

The actors, some professionals who are between main-stream jobs, others amateur, then reappear to discuss the dastardly plot over the Sunday roast beef trolley.

The only ketchup to be

glimped at this point is of the edible variety, and the clientele depart in the afternoon to resume their more humdrum existences.

A murder weekend is not everybody's idea of relaxation. Post-prandial tramping up and down fire escapes in pursuit of the whiff of cordite, followed by the examination of a body in a bath or an open coffin.

The close questioning of suspects is, even if this is merely a form of high jinks, not quite the same as mowing the lawn. It is a fantasy weekend for guests who are mostly middle class, of mid-dling years and by no means unintelligent.

The Whodunnit Company, which organises entertainment all over the country for people who are brought together in a fictitious group such as the St Giles Society, once staged a "horror weekend".

The company's proprietor, Edward Holden, insisted that all the guests should produce a medical certificate beforehand. "We staged a mass seizure," he said, "and people became seriously spooked, so we haven't done it since. I was worried about what guests might do to themselves."

Such concerns are not ill-founded. On another occasion, a guest was thought to be play-acting when in fact he was having an epileptic fit — happily, he recovered.

And six years ago, the Algonquin Hotel in New York forgot to warn its normal guests that it was hosting a theme weekend. So when an actor ran through the lobby with a blazing gun, there was widespread panic.

The birthplace of the murder mystery weekend was Torquay, where Agatha Christie grew up, and in particular the Imperial Hotel. Now, they tend to be staged at three-star establishments, often in the



The first victim falls in Neil Simon's *Murder by Death*, a spoof of the murder mystery genre in which the dinner guests are all fictional detectives

West Country. The Spread Eagle in Thame is a favourite location, partly because it allows the plot creators to introduce frogmen discovering bodies in the Isis, and partly because nearby Oxford is an attractive venue for an excursion.

Nobody is actually required to turn their mind to solving a murder all weekend, but nonetheless, some do.

Mary Gleeson, an adult education lecturer from Amersham, was so excited at the prospect of her sixth murder weekend in seven years that she arrived four and a half hours early on the Friday.

She brought a selection of choice depending on the amount of running about I want to do. As she filled in her time by eating cream cakes, she explained its lasting appeal.

"It is much more fun than watching Agatha Christie on television," she said. "The suspense keeps me going and the actors want us to have a good time."

This is the sort of trip on which a woman can come on her own and get involved as much as she likes. I could not sit on a beach."

At her table at dinner, she was sitting with two German women from Frankfurt — "We find the English sense of humour very odd but we like it" — and a couple from Horsham in West Sussex who were participating because they prefer to chat to fellow guests and socialise rather than sit on their own.

"A theme weekend fills in a gap for corporate people who don't know what to talk about to each other," Holden said.

"Our actors have to come up with clever lines off the top of their heads. Some guests test us with questions — especially about dates."

"One year there was a daunting row of Cadbury executives and another time

Oliver Reed came as a guest. In the morning, we saw him with shaving cream on his face, looking slightly the worse for wear, and then he disappeared for the rest of the weekend."

Holden sticks to a strict rule about "murdered" actors not re-emerging over the weekend except to take a bow on Sunday. Seeing a body rise from the dead in time for breakfast, as occurs with some companies, hardly adds to the authenticity of what he terms "the show".

There are always the inevitable guests who giggle or who come up with a ready quip — "I can't solve any murder mysteries until I go to the toilet" — until they are quietened by the sight of the dreaded body. It does look realistic.

The acting is wholehearted — and some weekends may involve seven or eight actors — and so, for that matter, is the audience participation. One particular guest, who came in a wheelchair, insisted on being carried up and down the stairs in search of blood and gore and was ultimately even more exhausted than the actors themselves.

There is more than an element of competition among the guests to guess the murderer, but Holden reckons that only about a third of the guests get it right.

This particular plot culminated in a shooting, another murder and an arrest. By noon on Sunday, the culprit was revealed by two guests able to congratulate themselves that they were a match for any Poirot.

For my part, I had suspected almost everyone else, including most of the members of the St Giles Music Appreciation Society. Somewhat chastened by the ingenuity of my fellow guests, I left the hotel and made my way back to reality.

POST MORTEM FACT FILE



Murder most foul, as guests start the weekend's work by discovering the victim

board stay at the four-star Jarvis Fairfield Manor Hotel in York departing on December 13 for £59, based on two sharing. Coaches transport participants from various pick-up points.

Crystal Britain (0181-390 8513) is offering murder mystery

day trips from London to Brighton on the Orient Express from next March for £180. Breakfast and a three-course lunch are included.

HF Holidays (0181-905 9558) offers a weekend in March at Sedburgh in the Yorkshire Dales for £119.

Padwick & Ball (0181-367 6793) has a murder weekend in Abingdon on January 23 at £99 for two nights' half-board and another in Brighton on February 6 for £109.

For more information call the British Tourist Authority (0181-946 9000).



On a knife edge: the victim always has to be realistic

Horror addicts can also get their fix on guided historic tours

Feel the chill on the street

SINCE early childhood I have suffered from what some might call an obsessional fear of psychopaths. I decided to face up to my phobia — joining a Jack the Ripper tour of London. Joanna Hunter writes.

I was among a group of 60-odd people. But none seemed particularly strange. Most were American, but there was a significant English presence, the majority also being less than 30.

Our guide was Steve, whose fantastic energy turned out to be the most terrifying part of the tour. He described the personal histories, last sightings and in gory detail, murders of the Ripper's five victims.

"It's supposed to be scary, not funny," complained disgruntled walker. I was also initially disappointed: Steve's pitch was a cross between school trip and Panto, enjoying the crowd into choruses of "oohs" and "aahs", and describing one of the victims as "a sort of Dick Van Dyke in a skirt".

The first recorded serial killer stalked East London in the late summer of 1888. Known as Jack the Ripper in reference to his gruesome habit of disemboweling his victims, his identity, of course, remains a mystery.

EAST LONDON is no longer a seething den of Victorian vice, and to the disappointment of some of my companions, most of the murder scenes have been pulled down and replaced by offices and restaurants.

Strolling through brightly lit streets surrounded by people is hardly terrifying, and I was glad that Steve didn't attempt to over-hype an already dramatic story.

More murder mystery than psychotic sightseeing, The Ripper Walk is informative and surprisingly fun. After two hours walking the streets on a damp November night (with only the briefest break in the pub) the crowd was still gripped. But when we were left at Aldgate East underground station to disappear back into the night, we were none the wiser to Jack's true identity.

London Walks (0171-624 3078) runs Jack the Ripper tours from Tower Hill Underground station daily at 7.30pm and at 3pm on Saturdays.

A Classic Murders and Crimes tour of West London leaves Embankment Tube station at 6.30pm on Saturdays. Adults £4.50, students and pensioners £3.50. Children under 15 go free when accompanied by an adult.

The Witchery Murder and Mystery Tour (0131-225 6945) offers tours of Edinburgh's Old Town for £6, by appointment only.

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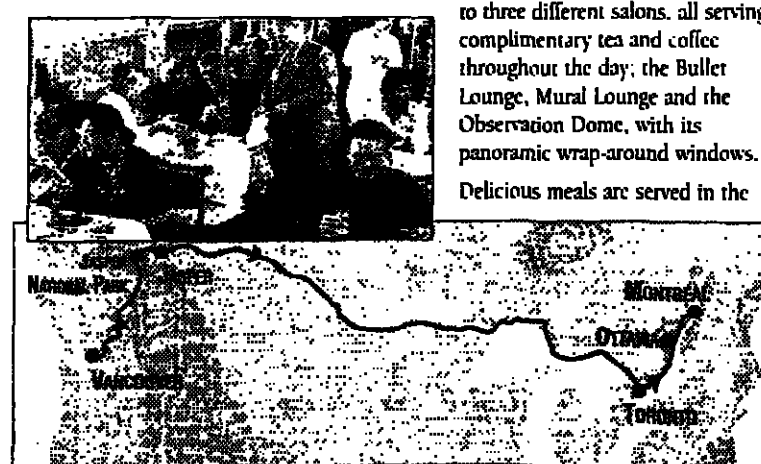
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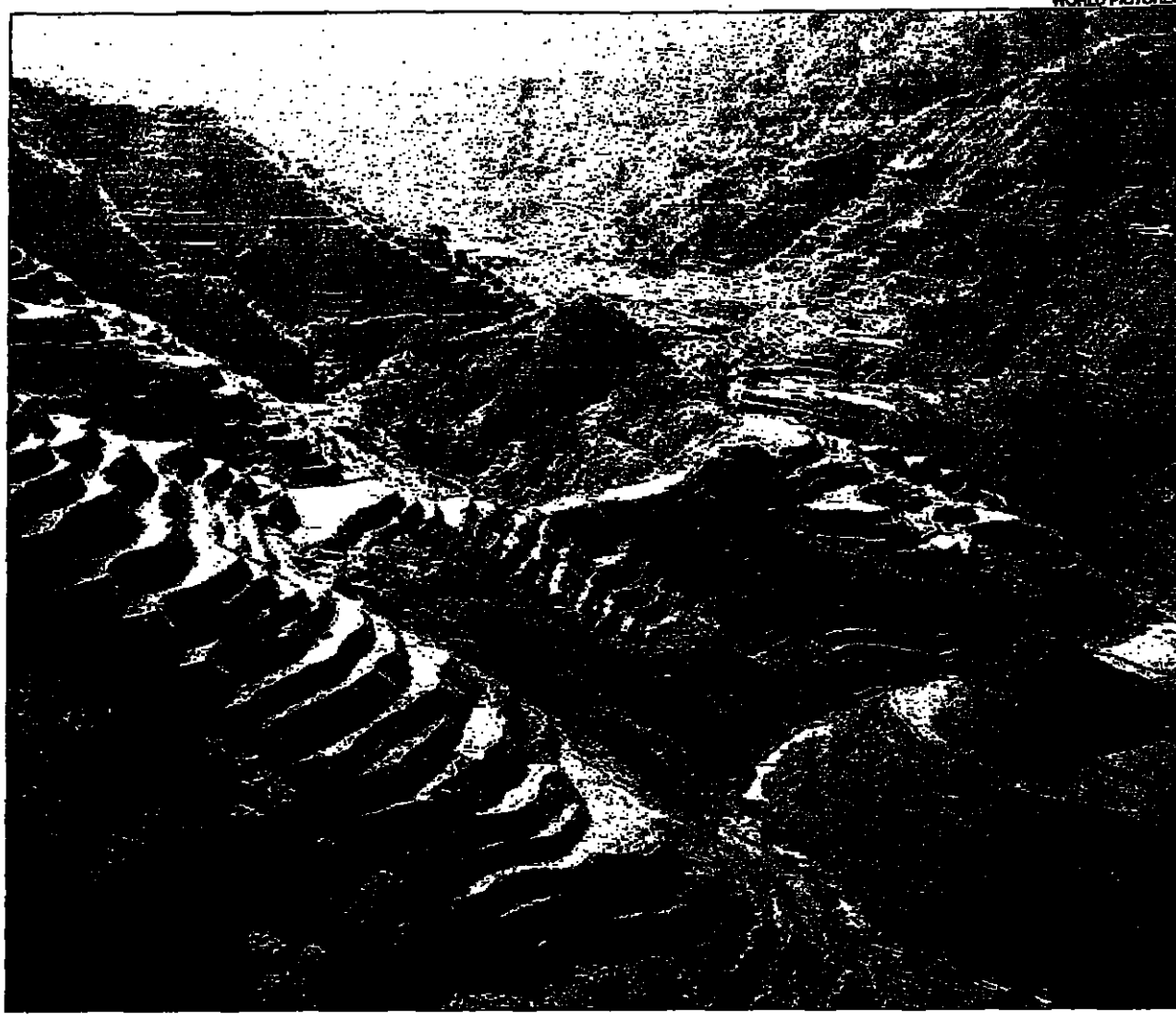
With rice terraces under threat, Philippine tourists may have to help out, says Adam Easton

Worms turn as wonder goes under

Tourists may soon be charged to visit the 2,000-year-old Banaue rice terraces in the Philippines, which are being destroyed by an unlikely agent — giant earthworms. The narrow terraces, dubbed the Eighth Wonder of the World by the country's Department of Tourism, attract one million visitors annually. But in recent years, many of the once-stunning terraces have collapsed or become overgrown with weeds. The origin of the worms, which can be 18in long, is uncertain, but they may have arrived when higher-yielding strains of rice were introduced to the area after the Second World War.

Christopher Pagadut, project development officer of the Rice Terraces Commission (RTC), said: "The worms bore deep within the stone retaining walls of the terraces, producing an effect like a hole in a dyke. When the monsoon rains come they wash away the soil, leading to the collapse of the wall and the terrace. It only takes a week of rains to destroy a 1,000-year-old terrace." Commission workers have so far failed to find a cure. Banaue mayor Tito Candalaria said: "Thirty years ago the grandeur of the rice terraces was magnificent. In 20 years — we do not know."

The RTC is helping to raise cash to maintain the terraces. It encourages farmers to supplement their income through other crafts, and to cultivate more cash crops such as mushrooms and cabbages. If this doesn't work, the Department of Tourism has considered introducing a fee for visitors. British tourist Jon Rogers said: "It would be a shame to have to pay, but if the scheme would help to maintain such an ancient wonder of craftsmanship then I would be happy to."



The Banaue rice terraces in the Philippines, an agricultural and visual spectacle, are gradually crumbling

ITALIAN culture vultures will be in heaven this week: Pavarotti is singing in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* in Naples on Tuesday, Thursday and the following Wednesday (December 10), tickets from £52; Stravinsky's *L'oiseau de feu* is playing in Florence on Wednesday and Thursday, tickets for £20; and Verdi's *Rigoletto* is being performed in Genoa on Saturday, tickets from £47. Tickets and B&B accommodation at a selection of three to five-star hotels from £66 per twin room can be arranged through Liaisons Abroad (0171 376 4020).

CRAVING tortillas and tequila? First Choice (0161-742 2228) has 14 nights', three-star accommodation only, at a Mexican beach resort for £379 per person. Return flights to Puerto Vallarta or Cancun depart from Gatwick on Tuesday, December 9.

IF YOU are desperate to escape this December you might consider Lunn Poly's offer of flights only to Alicante for £99. Valid for 28 nights and including departure tax,



the flight departs from Birmingham on Thursday. Visit your local Lunn Poly shop for details.

MORE than just a trendy: Holland's largest Christmas market begins at Maastricht on Saturday (December 6). Amsterdam Travel Service (01992 456056) has two nights' B&B at the Hotel Bergere from £175 per person. Return Eurostar from London to Maastricht is also included.

WANTING to polish up your technique before you hit the piste? Sheffield Ski Village (0114 276 8822) is offering Slope Off weekend breaks from £59 for one night and £99 for two nights, including B&B, eight hours' tuition, lift passes and equipment hire.

JOANNA HUNTER

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SRI LANKA hopes to capitalise on British determination — and our abiding interest in tea and cricket — to boost its tourism trade, which has been badly hit by terrorism, Tony Dave writes.

Many former colonies reject their British past, but Sri Lanka is planning to launch a "Discover British Ceylon" campaign next year that will focus on tea plantations, cricket fields, historical and cultural attractions and the gem and spice industries our ancestors helped to create.

Encouraged by the reluctance of many British holiday-makers to leave Lankar despite last week's horrific terrorist attack, the Sri Lankans are confident that their own difficulties will not deter British tourists either.

Their new campaign will, however, keep visitors away

Sri Lanka brews up target for tourism

from the worst trouble spots including Colombo, the capital, where scores of people have died in bomb attacks in the last two years, and the northern strongholds of the Tamil Tigers liberation movement.

Brions top the list of foreign tourists to Sri Lanka, with 50,000 out of a total of 300,000 travelling so far this year, but these figures have been static for 15 years.

"We have set a target of one

million visitors within the next five years.

"We believe we can achieve that if we can convince people that Sri Lanka is safe for travel and safe for investment," Ranjith Perera, the tourist board director, said on a visit to London. "There is tremendous untapped potential in Britain."

Tea festivals and exhibition cricket matches are planned as part of the new campaign, but tourist officials are also keen to promote the country's golf courses and coastal attractions.

Sri Lanka boasts spectacular shipwrecks and coral reefs. Its newest attraction is a wetland visitor centre, which includes a traditional fisherman's village, an exhibition on nature conservation, a herb garden and a shop full of "marsh memories".

Fancy sailing the high seas?

DO YOU have the taste for an adventure on the high seas? Then join the crew of an 18th-century square rigger sailing to the New World.

You'll sleep in a hammock, hoist the sails, scrub the decks and take the helm. If you are fit, don't suffer seasickness, a trip of a lifetime could come true. The £8-million replica of Captain Cook's *Endeavour* is preparing for an eight-week voyage to America in the new year. She will carry 35 amateur crew, 13 officers and professional sailors and four passengers.

After repairs, visitors will be able to board *Endeavour* until December 14, when she leaves for dry dock in Hull. The ship leaves Hull on January 8 and departs for America six days later from Plymouth Stairs, from where Captain Cook set sail in the original *Endeavour* in 1768.

Maritime Museum — is being refitted at Whitby, North Yorkshire, where the first *Endeavour* was built in 1765.

The docks and workshops are open to visitors until December 8. Sailmakers can be seen working the canvas, riggers splicing rope and seamen tarring the ratlines — the rope ladder steps between the rigging — all using 18th-century methods.

After repairs, visitors will be able to board *Endeavour* until December 14, when she leaves for dry dock in Hull. The ship leaves Hull on January 8 and departs for America six days later from Plymouth Stairs, from where Captain Cook set sail in the original *Endeavour* in 1768.

More than 200 years later, *Endeavour's* route to America — a voyage Cook never made — is via Tenerife. On the second leg it heads for St Thomas in the Virgin Islands, then Nassau, before arriving at Palm Beach, Florida, on March 5.

For crew members the voyage from Hull to Tenerife will cost £506. From the Canaries to Florida: £1,515. The whole trip costs £1,787.

Paying passengers will need to find £2,575 for the first leg: £8,030 for the second part. The fare for the whole trip is £10,606.

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THE TIMES

Still life prints only £4.25 each

To celebrate its *Objects of Desire* exhibition, the Hayward Gallery has created three beautiful prints exclusively for *Times* readers. These high-quality reproduction prints capture the excitement and variety of the modern still life as seen in the Hayward's groundbreaking exhibition — on until January 4 — organised by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The three prints are from works by Carlo Carrà, Pablo Picasso and Max Beckmann and represent three important 20th-century masterpieces.

Each print measures approximately 420 x 594mm with a border and is available for just £4.25 or £9.75 if you order all three, a saving of more than 20 per cent.

Picasso's evocative *Still Life with Pitcher and Apples* reflects a nostalgia for a classical past and represents a sensuous portrait of his wife, Marie Thérèse.

Max Beckmann's striking *Still Life with Fallen Candles* echoes the classic still life motif of *memento mori*, a reminder of the transience of earthly life.

Carlo Carrà's *Still Life with Triangle* illustrates a yearning for timeless order, an idealised spiritual vision, in which traditional still life objects are revealed through modern eyes.

RIGHT: Max Beckmann
 (1884-1950)
Still Life with Fallen Candles (1929)
 The Detroit Institute of Arts
 ©DACS 1997

CENTRE: Pablo Picasso
 (1881-1973)
Still Life with Pitcher and Apples (1919)
 Musée Picasso, Paris ©Succession Picasso/DACS 1997

FAR RIGHT: Carlo Carrà
 (1881-1966)
Still Life with Triangle (1917)
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CHANGING TIMES

AROUND THE WORLD A WEEKEND GUIDE

JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

Secret life of a sardine

THE history of sardines is explained in the Musée Imaginaire de la Sardine at Sète in southern France. The museum houses about 1,000 empty sardine tins and offers riveting facts about the history of the humble fish. Christopher Columbus, it seems, left the Old World with 650 barrels of them on board the *Santa Maria*, and the expression "packed like sardines" is derived from this type of storage.

The sardine tin was invented in 1820 (by a Frenchman); it had to be opened with a hammer and chisel — the key opener came 50 years later. Visitors can climb into a tin to experience the perspective of the cramped fish and, of course, enjoy a *dégustation*. Museum admission costs £10, closed Mondays (0033 4 67 14 91 75).

On the map

WHAT are Niska Banja, Sokobanja and Vrnjacka Banja, Galena and Fajirah? They were among the "new" holiday destinations that were being promoted by hopeful tourist boards and tour operators at London's World Travel Market last week. The first three are spa towns in Serbia. So far the only tour operator to Serbia is Thomson Holidays, which offers skiing in Kopaonik from £195 for a week's self-catering. Historic for America's state of Illinois. Other attractions include the world's only McDonald's

museum in Des Plaines, and the production of more sweets than anywhere else in the US — Illinois is home to Brach's Candies, the Blackhawk Chocolate Trail and Tootsie Roll Industries.

Fajirah in the United Arab Emirates retains more traditional Arabic character than its booming neighbour Dubai. The tiny emirate has huge sandy beaches, excellent diving and a landscape that ranges from mountains dotted with ancient forts to hidden wadis and lush gardens. You may doubt whether these places will succeed on the tourist map. Well, look what you can do with a mosquito-ridden swamp in central Florida.

Breathe easy

THE Penang Mutiara Beach Resort in Malaysia is offering free accommodation to guests staying in the hotel at any time when the Air Pollutant Index (API) passes the critical 100 level. "There has been a great deal of publicity about high levels of air pollution in Malaysia," said Peter Gibbons, the resort's general manager. "Certainly we've had our problems. But since early October the API level has been well below the 100 level, and visibility over 10 kilometres. So we're putting our pockets where our mouths are, and offering this unconditional refund to highlight the greatly improved conditions in our area." A double room at the Mutiara Beach Resort (00604 8852828) costs about £44 per night.

Mystic history

THE New England port of Mystic, Connecticut, is bracing itself for a tourist invasion after the December release of Steven Spielberg's *Amistad*. The *Amistad* episode is a notorious part of Connecticut history. In 1839, 53 people were kidnapped from their west African homes, forced aboard the schooner *Amistad* and borne off as slaves to a sugar plantation in Cuba. The Africans took over the ship and tried to sail back home. When this failed they were taken into custody in New London, stood trial in New Haven and later in Hartford. It was here that former US President John Quincy Adams successfully argued on their behalf in what is often cited as the first civil rights case decided by the Supreme Court.

A reproduction schooner *Amistad* is to be built "to teach lessons of history, co-operation and leadership" at Mystic Seaport. America's leading maritime museum which houses the world's largest collection of boats and maritime photographs. More information from Discover New England (01732 742777).

TRAVEL insurance costs 10 per cent more than it should because of false claims, according to Home & Overseas, which processes 147,000 claims by British holidaymakers each year. The company gives the example of a man who claimed for the cost of an appendectomy... 17 times. A significant number of claims are patently phoney: one careless traveller reckoned to have lost 33 suitcases over three years, while another wanted repayment for treatment he had received in an Indian village — which had been under water for five years. A particularly enterprising gourmet demanded £1,600 for Iranian caviar "stolen between Heathrow and home", he dropped the claim when asked for a receipt.

In the Po delta

THE introduction of the shallow-draught *MS Venezia* for next year has enabled KD River Cruises (01372 742033) to offer holidaymakers an unusual and romantic glimpse of the intricate waterways, canals and lagoons of the Po delta.

On an eight-day trip from Venice to Lombardy or vice-versa,



Lights, camera, action: on location in Mystic, Connecticut, for Steven Spielberg's film *Amistad*, which goes on release next month

the 120-passenger ship stops off at Murano and Burano, Chioggia, Verona, Ferrara and Cremona, with optional visits to see the Donatello reliefs in the basilica of St Anthony in Padua and to Mantua and Parma.

Find out more about

stinkhorns, slime mould and puff balls by joining a Foraging for Fungi tour in Lithuania next summer.

organised by the Field Studies Council (01743 850522). The environmental charity is running 42 holiday courses for serious naturalists — the ten-day Lithuanian tour costs £1,300 which includes flights and full board. An 11-day *Flowers in the Landscape* tour to Cyprus in April, accompanied by an expert botanist, costs £1,030.

Other general interest holidays are aimed at environmental enthusiasts and include Romania's Carpathian mountains where you will find castles and monasteries, volcanoes, salt mountains, magnificent geological highlights, wildflowers and wildlife, even glimpses of bears and wolves. This 13-day tour in June costs £1,380.

Klong holiday

MAGIC of the Orient (01293 537700) is offering the chance to experience life in Bangkok's "klongs", the network of canals which lie across the Chao Phraya River from the main city sprawl. Guests stay in the wooden Thai House on a family farm among mango trees and coconut palms, eating home-cooked food bought at markets and exploring the klongs by boat. Visits include a trip to the Royal Barge Museum, the Thai Massage School at Wat Po, and an orchid farm. A two-day (one-night) stay costs £158 or can be combined with other Thai holidays. Four nights full-board at the Thai House and seven nights (room only) in Phuket cost £558, including flights.

THE rash of all-inclusive holidays is spreading to the Black Sea coast. Balkan Holidays (0171-543 5566) is offering the first in Bulgaria, at the Elenite Holiday Village situated eight miles north of Sunny Beach, the country's largest resort. The village is on a hillside above a shingle beach, with watersports, ice-creams, afternoon teas, *racia* (the fiery local plum brandy), beer and Bulgarian wine all part of the package. Gastronomy is rarely a highlight in Bulgaria, and the three-meal-a-day buffet service, seemingly inevitable with all-inclusive holidays, is unlikely to improve the quality of the food. Prices are from £349-£469 a week, £495-£669 for two weeks, including flights.

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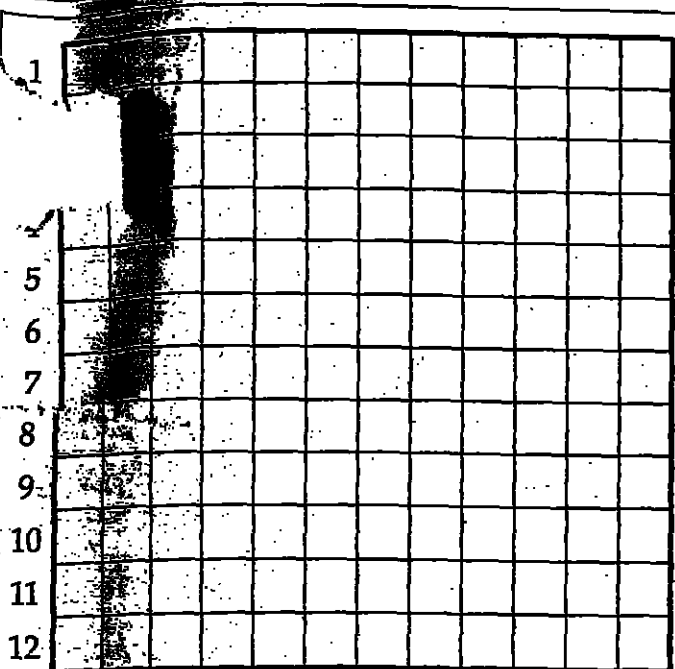
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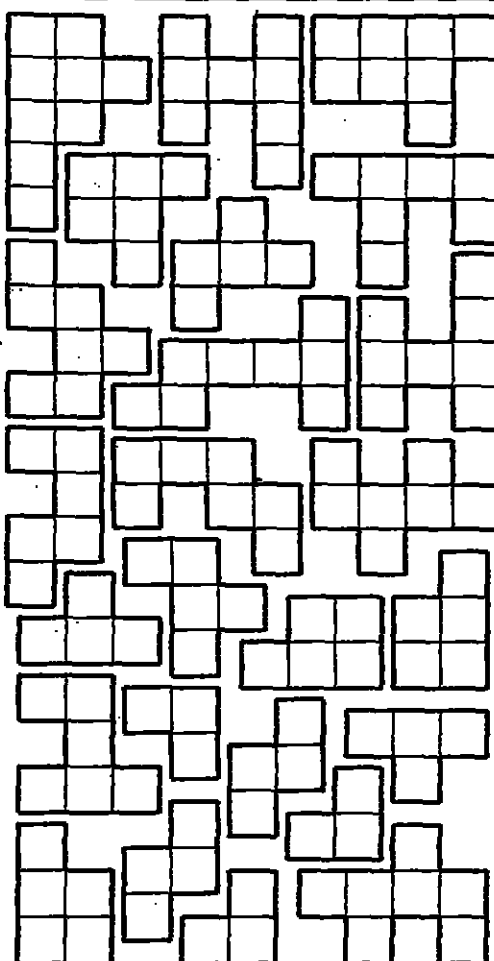
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Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3438, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE, by Thursday, December 11.

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THE jigsaw clues, given in alphabetical order of their answers, lack an appropriate definition. The jigsaw pieces alongside are laid out face down, so the letters cannot be seen; they must be turned over and placed correctly on the grid, and the jigsaw pattern delineated. As with many a jigsaw puzzle, however, there is one wrong piece, which fits but in fact comes from another puzzle; solvers should highlight it. The further clues are normal and should assist in the correct placement of the jigsaw pieces: the two answers of each pair exactly occupy the appropriate row, with either answer first. Chambers (1993) is recommended. One simple echoic word may be found in the OED, but is straightforwardly clued.

CLUES

● Curse Germany ● A gypsy girl's name ● Leaders of ultra-left arrested by the Indian authorities ● Half finished attack ● Meet and pass round? ● Ecstasy — least on butter ● 50% of prostitutes call on the phone ● A sign in iron ● Travel up north, employed by Morgan Grenfell ● Menstruary chap ● Chinese people had possession ● Crucial vacancy in band ● The power of a British pint? ● Parking these days in one's own home ● Cruelty the Spanish harshly ● Quarrel in Portuguese ● Goodwife changing sides ● The epitaph of a disreputable person ● Self-catering to start here ● Verily has to go to bed on time ● People of fashion living in Kent? ● Society has very little power ● A corded cloth in brown ● Order pint here ● Grunt in labour

FURTHER CLUES

1. Catch business associate leaving Russia and heading west ● Falstaff's friend knocked back the whole drink. 2. Highly radioactive — stop there — leave here! ● Blustery promenade — very welcoming! 3. Some newfangled point ● What a basket! Let him take one of the *Scutellaria*. 4. Travelling by Tube, you'll find confusion about restaurant gap ● Costable's Leaping Horse is executed by river. 5. A small sheep farmer could be self-important ● A dummy test — well, one of two. 6. A member of Gadus (pollock): angle for the sake of protein ● Will girl play Hamlet? 7. "O mighty-mouth'd..." a classic pastiche lacking the path of *Tempest* ● Institute — British one's no good ● A Christ-child not esoteric here? ● 1 process a soft signal with resistance, electromotive force, and current. 9. Native of Banjarmasin, Borneo ● In outskirts of Kremenchuk, Ukraine, one may discover burial mound 10. The return of Rod Laver ● Poorly administered, losing millions, see this island perhaps 11. Airy? Of lungs, peculiarly ● To associate with girls — London one? 12. American withdrawing monkeys to bet heavily ● A little ping on a set of bells

Solution to No 3435:
Contributions by Blank

S E T W E V O W E S S E S A
A P E P S I A A P P L E S
M H R S T E E L I E R E A S
F O R E B Y F B I C Y C L E
O R I G O U L O S I S T O N
R S T A R R E O V A L O R T
D E S C E N T K A L E N D S
T H E R I V E R T H A M E S
S T Y E D G S I R E N S R S
P E E L A R O S E N O Y E S
A I L A T O L L G R U N T S
C G R W A T V O N U S U I S
I L E U S T A L O N B U R R O
N O V A E O T H E N V E E R
G O B E T W E E N E V A R C

The thematic vertical lights are all tributaries of the River Thames in London (Stamford and Beverley Brooks, the River Wandle, the Westbourne, the Tyburn, the River Fleet, the Walbrook, the Neckinger, the Ravensbourne, the River Lea, and Beckton and Crossness sewage treatment works). The quotation is "with pomp of waters unwitstood unto the ocean" (S. Daniel).

The winner is J.D. Brown, of Shepton Mallet, Somerset. The runners-up are Malcolm Kennedy of Seaford, Sussex; H. Lawson of Edinburgh, Scotland; Keith Witfield of Moscow, Russian Federation; Brenda J. Widger of Altrincham, Cheshire; Mrs A.J. Bancroft of Lambley, Carlisle.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

TODAY I conclude my review of bridge software.

Bridge Master: Aimed at everyone from novice to expert, this is a well produced and technically faultless program from top Canadian player Fred Gitelman. It presents declarer play problems and rearranges the opponents' cards so your line of play will always fail, unless you select the best line.
£9.95 (Windows 3.1 or 95, DOS)

Counting at Bridge: From the former Dallas Ace player and fine writer Mike Lawrence, this excellent program for beginner to advanced player presents questions on the theme of counting the opponents' points and cards, helping you to make the necessary deductions for the best line of play.

£34.95 (Windows 3.1 or 95). Both of the above from Bridge Plus (0118-935 1052).

Bridge on the Internet: There are a few companies that provide on-line bridge 24 hours a day.

The two most established are www.bridgeplayer.com (£79 a year) and www.okbridge.com (\$99 a year), the latter boasting more than 10,000 members. Both offer a free month's trial. To play bridge live you need a computer, a modem, an Internet provider and a subscription to one of the services. Then you pay only for local phone calls to connect you to the provider.

This hand was played by Andy Bowles in London, partnering Marty Seligman, president of the American Psychological Association, in Philadelphia, via Okbridge:

Dealer West NS game IMPs

♠ 83
♥ K9653
♦ A1086
♣ 63
♠ 10106
♥ 1042
♦ QJ7
♣ QJ10
♠ K7542
♥ 8
♦ 543
♣ A982

Contract: Four Hearts by South
Opening lead: queen of clubs

South played in Four Hearts after a transfer sequence. East won the club lead and switched to spades. South winning the queen. King and another heart exposed the bad break. South took the ace, cashed the king of clubs, ruffed a club and after the ace of spades and a spade ruff reached this position:

♠ 9
♥ A1086
♦ 10
♣ 9
♠ 1010
♥ QJ7
♦ 9
♣ 9

Declarer exited with his last trump end-playing West to open up the diamonds. When West led the queen, Bowles guessed well to win in hand and finesse the ten on the way back.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 32

GRANGOISER
(b) One who will swallow anything. From the French *grand goster* "big throat". The proper name of a character in Rabelais. George Meredith, *Richmond, 1871*: "Our grangoiser public."
GORBELLY
(a) A protuberant belly, a garment with a loose belly. A person with a big pot. There are Nordic cognates. "Falstaff, reproaching the Londoners with their gorbells."
GLOP
(a) To swallow greedily. An echoic word imitating the sound of the action. *cf.* *glop*, Swedish dialect *glapa* to gulp down.
BALDERDASH
(c) Froth or frothy liquid. A jumbled and distasteful mixture of liquors, esp. of milk and beer, beer and wine, brandy and mineral waters. Ben Jonson, *New Inn*, 1629: "Beer or butter-milk, mingled together. It is against my freehold to drink such balderdash."

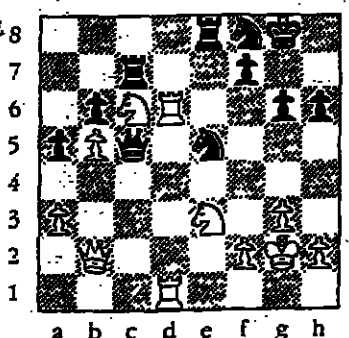
CHESS

by Raymond Keene

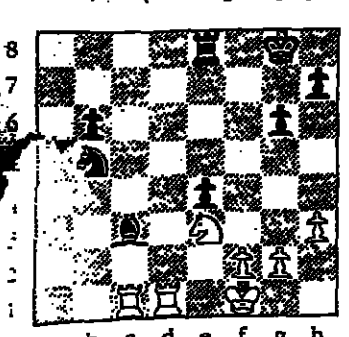
GIVEN that the number of possibilities in chess is ten to the power of 40, for practical purposes virtually limitless, some remarkable coincidences have arisen. It is not unknown for the same game to have been played twice, and there is even one notorious case where the Dutch grandmaster Donner lost a duplicate of a previous defeat, though surviving one move fewer the second time.

The power of coincidence came home to me while I was examining Reti's win as White against Capablanca from New York 1924 (see this column, November 1). If Reti had wavered before the start of the New York tournament that he would defeat both José Capablanca and Alexander Alekhine in 31 moves each and playing the same Winning Move, causing resignation, in both cases, he would have had many takers. But that is exactly what transpired. Given infallible foresight, Reti could have made a fortune.

First the Capablanca finale.



Here White played 31 Rd5 and Black resigned. He faces ruinous loss of material. Then, against Alekhine, Reti (White again) played



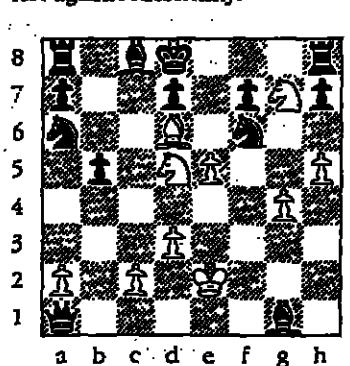
Again Be7 mate.

Truth is stranger than fiction. In the UK, the Hastings Premier, starts next month. Among the competitors will be grandmaster John Nunn, last year's winner, and teenage prodigy Luke McShane. Spectators are welcome. For further information call 01424 442500.

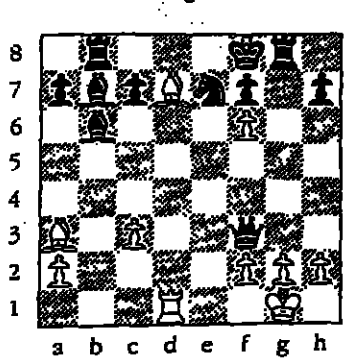
31 Rd5 and Alekhine, too, resigned. Already the exchange in arrears, he cannot escape disastrous losses.

The power of coincidence was also evident in the final strike of two of the most famous games of chess ever played, respectively named the Immortal Game and the Evergreen Game. In both cases, the celebrated German grandmaster Adolf Anderssen delivered the same death blow 21 Be7 on the same move.

In the Immortal Game Anderssen played White at London 1851 against Kieseritzky.



And for the repeat performance: the Evergreen Game was played later in the 1850s against Dufresne.



Again Be7 mate.

Truth is stranger than fiction. In the UK, the Hastings Premier, starts next month. Among the competitors will be grandmaster John Nunn, last year's winner, and teenage prodigy Luke McShane. Spectators are welcome. For further information call 01424 442500.

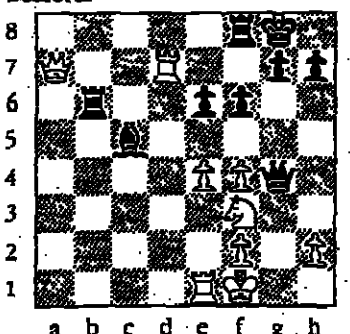
WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
White to play. This position is from the game Speelman - Short, London 1980.

White has a powerful concentration of force along the seventh but must be careful as his king is exposed. How did he find an effective way to attack and defend?

Your answer on a post-*The Times*, 1 Pennington London E1 9XN. The first answer drawn on Thursday a year's subscription to the Chess Society. The will be published next

Last week's solution: 1... Qxd4+ (2 Kxh4 Rh8+; 3 Kg5 Rh5 mate)
Last week's winner: R. Wesley, Bedford.



EVER SINCE Clive Anderson's acerbic tongue prompted the touchy Bee Gees to walk out during his show, he has been hailed a hero by many. The interviewer turned interviewee for the launch of Oil, a new BBC Web site.

Anderson was one of the first to allow himself to be probed by an online public for an hour. Asked if he realised Barry Gibb was getting increasingly angry, Anderson replied: "I must admit I wasn't picking up the vibes in the Bee Gees interview — perhaps I should have done. They seemed to be laughing, so was I, so was the audience. When Barry got up to go, we all thought at first he was only joking. When he kept going it was obvious, even to me, that the interview wasn't going as well as I'd thought it had been."

Elvis Costello, who was also in the studio at the time, "tried to smooth things over". Anderson did not speak to the Bee Gees after the show, instead they swept themselves off to catch their flight back to America, apparently as originally planned. "When it comes down to it, I either misjudged it or they had a sense of humour failure," concluded Anderson.

Others who have already been



All talk: Clive Anderson launches Oil on the Internet for the BBC

interviewed on Oil include the struggling Casio keyboard player John Shuttleworth, aka Graham Fellows, and *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* author Douglas Adams. Due to appear live in cyberspace in the next few weeks are former *Monty Python* star and now accidental tourist, Michael Palin, and Harlequin's French fly-

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott

votes, without paying premium phone rates for the privilege.

MONDAY is World Aids Day and as well as celebrities popping up around the country to help raise awareness and funds, Direct Connection is doing its bit. The Internet service-provider already helps the Terrence Higgins Trust to publish its Web site on the Internet (<http://www.tht.org.uk>) but now it is also pledging donations to the charity. For every new customer who mentions the trust when signing up, Direct Connection will donate £10 to the trust every year that the account is held. For more information call Direct Connection (0800 072 0000).

THIS is the last call for Cyberspace Thirty-Eight, which closes on Wednesday. Top prizes are two pairs of silver vouchers for on-track experience at the Brands Hatch race circuit, courtesy of Codemasters' TOCA Touring Car Championship title.

The silver package offers a visit to the Nigel Mansell Racing School at Brands Hatch, with a classroom briefing and then driving laps in the BMW 318, a single-seater racing car.

Cyberspace Thirty-Eight is open to anyone with a current driving licence. To enter you must create an outline or short script for an imaginary television advertising campaign for a Skoda sports car. Your treatment should cover no more than one side of A4 paper. Send your entry with your name, age and telephone number, to: Cyberspace Thirty-Eight, Computer Games and Pastimes, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. You may also e-mail entries to cyber@dircon.co.uk. The two winners, plus six runners-up, will also win PC copies of Codemasters' TOCA Touring Car Championship.

TWO BRAINS
ANSWERS

From page 36

Question 1:
142857 x 3 = 428571
Question 2:
E: The initial letters of One to Eight

NEW SOFTWARE

IN AMERICA, Dilbert the cartoon-strip character is a god, and it is easy to see why. There is something cool about this doughnut-munching, work-avoiding clerk which is instantly appealing. Dilbert's Desktop Games, moreover, are a hoot.

This stuff and nonsense is a glorified screensaver which is guaranteed to take the drudgery out of office life in the days leading up to Christmas — if not the new year, too. From Dreamworks Interactive, the Windows programme loads completely on to the hard disk and springs into action whenever the computer is left idle for too long.

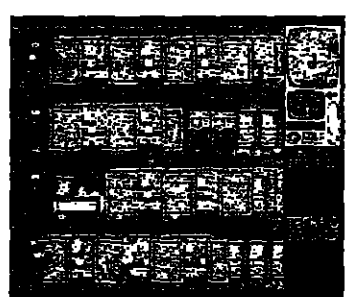
Designed to "motivate your funnybone", the programme offers ten mindless games to tackle as well as activities to crank, such as a *Jargonator*, which extends simple memos into intangible bureaucratic triumphs.

Most games have the same theme: avoiding work. *Project Pass-Off* requires you to deflect dodgy projects away from Dilbert while pushing the decent ones towards him. In *Techno-Raiders* you lead Dilbert over upward through the office floors, grabbing doughnuts and zapping co-workers and clueless bosses.

These are simple but addictive trinkets. There is also a boss key to return your screen to work mode at a single stroke should an employer approach.

Verdict: 9 out of 10. Madcap fun on the desktop with Dilbert and chums. £19.99.

WHICH southwestern state has led the United States in copper production since the early 1900s? Arizona.



Dilbert scores nine out of ten

Would you believe that most of Hawaii's famous beaches are man-made? No.

The Grand Canyon, the Painted Desert and Canyonlands National Park are all part of a plateau region that has the same name as which state? Colorado.

National Geographic's *GeoBee Challenge* is an American import intended for players aged ten and above. Of the 2,000 questions posed, unfortunately many are too taxing for most ten or 11-year-olds. There has been no attempt to localise the product for a British audience, and the question database is noticeably biased towards North America.

Worse still is the style of the quiz, a blatant rip-off of the winning *I Don't Know Jack* formula. Hosted by two characters, an irritating bee who pops into the picture from time to time, and an unseen question-master, players buzz in to take cracks at the questions. *GeoBee Challenge*, on dual format CD-Rom for PC and Mac, is not only hugely unoriginal but it is poorly executed and extremely dreary to play.

Verdict: 3 out of 10. Second-rate copycat quiz. £19.99.

SOLUTION TO JUMBO CROSSWORD 136

B I G B R O T H E R I S W A T C H I N G Y O U
S A N R E E R X S E E O E N I
T E N N E S S E E P R O F I T E E R A L A D D I N
U K N E T A A L R L T S H T E T
R H O N D D A S O N S A N D L O V E R S S U R E R
G F I R U O T T A M I
E L E M E N T A R Y F I E S T A H A R A S S I N G
O N S E A N H L A K T L U
N I G H T S P O T D O G C O L L A R P I C K L E
L I R V R E I G C W
W E A T H E R F O R E C A S T E R C R A C K P O T S
H N I A V R R C O R I O I
I N D E P E N D E N T C O H A B I T D U N E D I N
P P D E H A U E G C
P A P O O S E H A D R I A N F R I E N D O R F O E
E E C L A M G F N C U I R
T A R P A U L I N P I E C E D E R E S I S T A N C E
F M O D O D T X T N
S T E P P E B A R G E P O L E H A Y M A K E R S
I C U W A T A N D A B G I
D E T E S T I N G M I N U T E Q U E E N S L A N D
E I T A H B S Y T N E
S C O L D H U M A N I N T E R E S T E L A P S E S
M N R H A T O M S I B I W T
A D I P O S E I N E A R N E S T B R A I N W A V E
N S N L Z A M N O L L E K P
T W E E D L E D U M A N D T W E E D L E D E E

The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, is Tom Whitelaw, of Bearsden in Scotland

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners, The Times, Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

Q I have just got married and I am now in the process of advising various institutions of my change of name. However, I wish to keep my maiden name but add my husband's name after it. Can you please advise whether there should be a hyphen in between? — H.J. Beckingham (?)

A Anybody in Britain can choose to double-barrel their name. However, such a casual arrangement, although adequate in the eyes of the law, is often inadequate for modern bureaucracy and for many people lacks the psychological stamp of institutional approval. A more formal status can be achieved by combining husband's and wife's surname either by deed poll through a solicitor, or in the case of changing a name for reasons such as property interests or reasons of genealogy, by applying for a Royal Licence via the College of Arms to HIM the Queen. Hyphens (although increasingly unfashionable) are helpful, as they make it clear that a multiple name is indeed a surname, not a succession of first names.

Q Can it ever be right to wear brown shoes with a grey suit? — D.S. Rutter, Dorset

A Yes it can, but only when the cloth has a distinctly flannelly or tweedy appearance.

Q Could you please advise me on how to eat a small roasted bird, eg partridge, snipe or woodcock, at a formal dinner party. Is it permissible to chew the bones in your fingers? If not, could you advise me of the polite, but at the same time the best way, to get the maximum meat out of your bird. — Bally, Bognor

A The simple guide rests on the presence of finger bowls. If these are on the host's table, then bone-chewing is acceptable. If not, the bird is best attacked only with a knife or fork. As far as getting the maximum meat from it, the secret lies in first cutting with the knife directed towards the bone as when carving and secondly, that the host has ensured that the bird has been properly hung and expertly cooked.

Q When hosting a guest sleeping in the spare bedroom, is it considered bad manners to launder the bedclothes on the day of the guest's departure before they have left the house? — Jane M. Hibberd, Harston, Cambridge

A It rather defeats the object of hospitality to spend a weekend making people feel welcome, only to make it appear as if they are being bundled out at the end. Throughout a guest's stay their room is their territory, and there-

fore laundering the bedclothes before they have left does suggest a little undue haste.

Q Correspondence and invitations, as I understood, should be sent on cards with rounded corners, and cards with squared corners are reserved for tickets. I notice increasingly that correspondence and invitations are sent on squared-cornered cards. Am I being old-fashioned in thinking etiquette has changed? — Tudor Jones, Mold, Flint

A Nowadays square corners are correct form and are considered more elegant than round ones. This applies not just for tickets, but for invitation cards, correspondence cards, change of address notifications, birth announcements and indeed all stationery. Place cards that fit into little stands are the only exception: these can still have rounded edges.

Q If one passes a stranger in the street and likes the scent he or she is wearing, how can a polite enquiry be made as to the brand and supplier? — J.P. Smith, Stonehouse, Plymouth.

A At one time making personal comments was considered crass and vulgar, but nowadays such attention is considered more socially acceptable. However, a light touch is required, and any observation or enquiry should always take the form of a delighted and spontaneous compliment. An example could be: "I hope you don't mind me saying, but I just love the scent you are wearing." Whether the response is a beatific smile or a punch in the face is an occupational hazard you can ascertain only in individual situations.

Q I shall be grateful if you can comment on three features of current English language usage that mildly irritate and sometimes profoundly exasperate me. They are: 1) The pronunciation of "H" as "Haich". 2) The pronunciation of "says" (sez) as "sayze". 3) The substitution of "do you have" for "have you got". My disgust concerning 3) reached a pinnacle a few days ago when a film on television contained the lines: "We've got a servant problem in this house — no good saying we don't." Can you explain these deviations? — Patrick Palmer, Hereford.

A The guilty party is Estuary English, a patois once restricted to regions bordering the Thames estuary, but which is now increasingly widespread. Alarmists fear that within a few decades it will have completely eclipsed Received Pronunciation as the standard way to speak. Let's hope they are wrong.

John Morgan is Associate Editor of GQ

DAN BLAIR
PILOT FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTUREON THE MOONCHEQUERS ESTATE
DAN AND PEABODY DRESS FOR
THEIR FAVOURITE PURSUIT...

WORD WATCHING

By Philip Howard

GRANGOUSIER

- a. A type of foie gras goose
b. A swallower
c. An overcloak

GORBELLY

- a. A big paunch
b. An exclamation
c. A turrett with machicolation

GLOP

- a. To swallow greedily
b. An adopted child
c. A swallow's nest

BALDERDASH

- a. A race up a mountain
b. A mixed drink
c. A Nordic diacritic

Answers on page 35

TWO BRAINS

IN 1923 the psychometrician C.M. Cox estimated the greatest historical IQs in his *Genetic Studies of Genius*. His conclusions were as follows: 1. Goethe (210); 2. Leibniz (205); 3-4. Newton and Pitt the Younger (both 190); 5. Galileo (185). Notable omissions from his list were Da Vinci, Shakespeare and Einstein, who have variously been estimated as, respectively, 220, 210 and 205.

Question 1: What numbers can replace these letters?
ABCDEF x 3 = BCDEFA

Question 2: Which letter is next in this series?
OTTFFSS

Answers on page 35.

RAYMOND KEENE

CROSS WORDS

by Brian Greer

A nother of the antecedents of cryptic clues is the charade. This one is from Emma:

*My first doth affliction denote
Which my second was born to endure
My third is a sure antidote
That affliction to soften and cure*

("My third" here refers to the whole word).

There are many aspects to writing a good charade clue. The components should dovetail syntactically and semantically and care is needed with the nuts and bolts. The minimal structure is juxtaposition, with the definition of the whole word at the beginning or the end, as in: American planner spoils country house

(8). Extra words may be inserted (but only if they can be functionally justified), as in: Book made from stiff paper (4,5). Note that if "from" is used as a link, the structure should be whole from parts; conversely, if the link is "for", the structure should be parts for whole, while other words, such as "in", work in either direction (these remarks apply in general, not just to charade clues). Various phrases indicate the order of components. In particular, our convention is to use "on" to mean after in across clues and above in down clues.

One variation is when the parts can be related, as in: Blues used in service (5,4). Another is

when the split word can be construed as a phrase: Frightening place to be seated in plane? (9). Other ingredients of crypticity, such as homophony, can be stirred in: Roughly treat German author and composer, say (9). Some words can be split into more than two parts, as in: Examine row of birds from Northern Europe (12) and Affected by blues record playing thus in the small hours (12). Answers to anagram clues from two weeks ago: FRANÇOIS RABELAIS, DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI, WATER-SKI, ISLE OF MAN, WHEAT, TRANSPARENT, METROPOLIS, REAPPEAR. The anagram of TALCUM POWDER should have been WORLD CUP TEAM — my apologies.

PICTURE LINE

READERS are invited to suggest what Cherie Blair and Humphrey, pictured right, might be saying.

This picture, recently printed in *The Times*, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN.

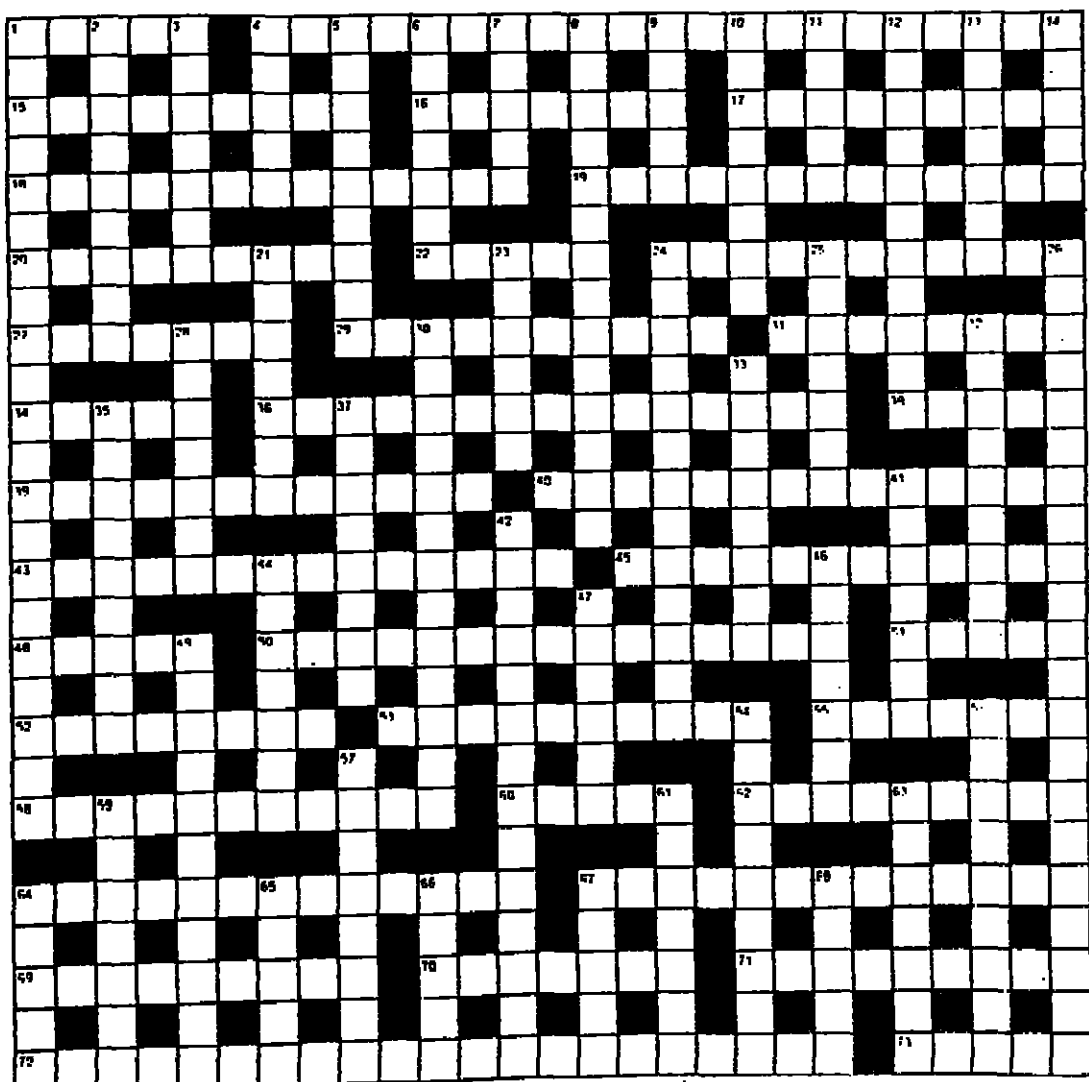
The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, December 4.

Last week's winning caption, left, was submitted by Richard E. Fay, of Crowborough, Sussex.



JUMBO CROSSWORD 138

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £125, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from black resin with a gold-plated clip, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 138, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday, December 8. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, December 13.

ALFRED DUNHILL
LONDON

NAME

ADDRESS

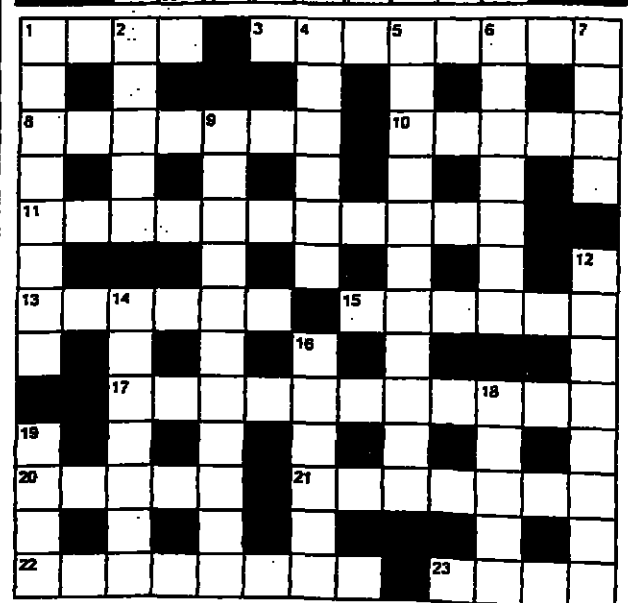
POSTCODE

ACROSS

- 1 Briefly, where addition's implied, "minus" is wrong (2,3)
- 4 Saw the disastrous outcome of Tom's prying (6,6,3,3)
- 15 Ordering a piece of jewellery, having phoned in (9)
- 16 Imagine tribesman having remedy to get rid of cold (7)
- 17 From this point of view, one may look down on the French and Italians (4,5)
- 18 Retracting one's opinions, suggesting recycling in two stages (4,4)
- 19 Is fan's letter unusual, keeping right emotions in check? (4,9)
- 20 Edward has rings run round him in disorderly retreat — totally destroyed (6,3)
- 22 African mum's excellent (5)
- 24 One working under cover, surprisingly centre-stage (6,5)
- 27 King getting prickly about Society being bastards (7)
- 29 Like a powerful clique round a girl, exceptionally fashionable (10)
- 31 Make the most of positive change number increasing 200-fold (8)
- 34 Member of family participating in Brownie ceremony (5)
- 36 Extinct bird's fare — farm animal, and wild one (9,6)
- 38 Series of notes made from back up of union periodical (5)
- 39 Data I refused to process, referring to apples of dubious origin (4,3,5)
- 40 Steps taken with section of wreckage, having instruction to find this? (4,8)
- 43 With their high-level connections, they may be snowed under (8,6)
- 45 Contributor to a book which has a redeeming feature (7,5)
- 48 Found in desert — a new variety of palm (5)
- 50 Candidate placed second in Latin
- 51 Energy running short troubled environmentalist (5)
- 52 One boy turned head, prying into another's affairs (8)
- 53 Striker on the box perhaps sheds light on this criminal's activity (4,6)
- 55 Side's not on time? Then test's not starting! (7)
- 58 Long sentence beginning a man's right-wing biography (4,7)
- 60 Cannot be converted, going back to "The Art of Jazz" (5)
- 62 Northern town may be heated with gas (9)
- 64 Two pairs of sides coming across each other, but determined not to meet (13)
- 67 Sporting occasion that could be elegant and hearty (6,7)
- 69 Checks supply of French art that can be trusted first (9)
- 70 Animal seen next to mountain ash originally, or another tree (7)
- 71 Wand, perhaps, producing transient light (5,4)
- 72 Composer and romantic poet with names listed slightly out of order (6,9,6)
- 73 One supervising tour goes astray after road junction (5)

DOWN

- 1 This engineer left things shipshape and Bristol fashion, and kept on the rails (8,7,6)
- 2 Removed fat, including wrinkle (6,3)
- 3 Fellow catches chill in Eucharistic vestment (7)
- 4 Youngster rebuked when boxing in learner driver (5)
- 5 One good in a part sent up outrageous opera (9)
- 6 Greeting called out during Proms — odd kind of cult (7)
- 7 Sergeant perhaps intercepts soldier turning up without proper identification (5)
- 8 Writer's final denial of deceit, without claiming to be faithful (5,9)
- 9 Perfect cards come from me (5)
- 10 Lines expressing kind of humour found in Irish community (8)
- 11 Study Isles — Man perhaps? (5)
- 12 Coping with seasonal variations, having prepared for a freeze (11)
- 13 Church has girl offering Communion vessel (7)
- 14 Diplomacy involves English player's order to keep quiet (5)
- 21 Greek's plain to be seen in US state capital (7)
- 23 Uneasy, holding a gee-gee that's poorly groomed (6)
- 24 As a rule put out, having to follow them (7,6)
- 25 Stretch of river occupied by vessels (7)
- 26 The Washington Post may keep up this standard (3,4,6,6)
- 28 Secret's out — one was carrying an old torch (7)
- 30 Invite new talent — it's bound to turn up (13)
- 32 Urgent news breaking? Press, TV etc. called in (9)
- 33 Try university parties — they once shielded gatecrashers (8)
- 35 Assesses a vault seen, ignoring last tumble (9)
- 37 Knight with firm set up on Greek island winds up elsewhere (8)
- 41 At first viewing, likely venue is discussed (2,5)
- 42 Offered tender inducement, not taking account of the price one may have to pay (14)
- 44 One lawgiver has to accommodate politician's initial demands (7)
- 46 No terribly short letter? Yes it is! (7)
- 47 Navigator's instrument, old, cannot keep time (6)
- 49 Acting casually — no new risk seen round US city (11)
- 54 Rex felt urge to reform, presumably being this? (9)
- 56 Be very sorry to lose power, then rave, coming back in (2-7)
- 57 Huge company deficit — everything in short supply (8)
- 59 Weapon currently being restricted based anger in rural establishment (7)
- 61 Bumpsee city finally abandoned religious symbol (7)
- 63 Hint at struggles, having to lash out right and left (7)
- 64 Set up a record, with urgent appeal for cash abroad (5)
- 65 Set of principles held by Elizabeth I conscientiously (5)
- 66 Come again about snappy dog (5)
- 67 Keep holding line — take 50% of the division (5)
- 68 Governor offering guidance for one wishing to go straight (5)

TIMES TWO
CROSSWORD

No 1264

ACROSS

- 1 Corporate group (4)
- 3 James — Nocturne painter (8)
- 8 Steward; dangerous ball (7)
- 10 Stolen property handler (5)
- 11 Eventually (2,3,6)
- 13 US state nearest Russia (6)
- 15 Liquid container; nerve (slang) (6)
- 17 Student of word origins (11)
- 20 Unruly gang behaviour (slang) (5)
- 21 Produce new version of (text) (7)
- 22 Armorial science (8)
- 23 Powdered grain; food served (4)

DOWN

- 1 From the Good Book (8)
- 2 Celtic priest (5)
- 4 Clod breaker; Churchill's pupil (6)
- 5 No trouble, yer (2,3,2,4)
- 6 Merciful (7)
- 7 Smell strongly (4)
- 9 Very close (5,2,4)
- 12 Not touching alcohol (8)
- 14 One getting even (7)
- 16 Less good, less well off (6)
- 18 Picture: idol (5)
- 19 Georgian city, has Mar-quest (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1263

- ACROSS: 1 Strata 5 Mood 9 Refugee 10 Attain
11 Hercules 12 O'Casey 15 Warden 18 Claudius 20 Sigma
22 Dilemma 23 Gulls 24 Ticker
- DOWN: 2 Target 3 Affected 4 Angel 6 Oust 7 Devise
8 Reason 13 Academic 14 Arcade 16 Acting 17 Curfew
19 Allot 21 Goats

THE TIMES BOOKS

CROSSWORD ENTHUSIASTS — SPECIAL OFFER
The Times Jumbo Crossword Book 3 is available to Times readers for £4.95 while supplies last from The Times Bookshop.
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